



*Umbra refert fragiles, dederunt quas cura dolorq;
Reliquias, studijs assiduusq; labor.*

*Mentem humilem, sacri servanem limina veri,
Votis supplicibus, qui dedit, ille videt.*

Printed for JACOB CHAMBERLAIN at the Bible and Crown in the Poultry, near Chancery.

F. R. S. S. S. S.



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A COMPLETE
COLLECTION
OF THE
SERMONS

Of the REVEREND and LEARNED

JOHN OWEN, D.D.

Formerly published: with an Addition of many others
never before printed.

Also several valuable TRACTS, now first published from
MANUSCRIPTS: and some others, which were very scarce.

To which are added his LATIN ORATIONS, whilst *Vicechancellor*
of *Oxford*, taken from his own Copies.

And to the whole are prefix'd MEMOIRS of his LIFE: some LETTERS written
by him upon special Occasions: and his FUNERAL SERMON, preach'd by
Mr. *David Clarkson*.



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Printed for JOHN CLARK at the Bible and Crown in the Poultry,
near Cheap-side, M. DCC. XXI.

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L O N D O N:
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T O

Sir John Hartopp *Bar.*

S I R,



A M the more easy in this Address, since I know no person in the world to whom the Dedication of this Volume can with so much justice be directed, as to yourself. The long and intimate acquaintance you had with Doctor OWEN, his particular relation of a Pastor to you, your mutual affection during his life, and the just esteem you have always shewed for his memory, as also the special concern you have in

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

in the furtherance of this Work, do all justify the presenting it to you in this way. It is fit the world should know, how much they are indebted to your great industry and care for the valuable *Manuscripts*, which make up so great a part of this Volume, and for all other assistances you have given to the Work; which I doubt not will be recompensed with the lasting pleasure of your own mind, as the result of that good service you have done to the Church of God.

I know so well your unaffected modesty, that I should not venture to give you any disturbance by mentioning your excellent virtues, and other qualifications which adorn the Christian, and the Gentleman, if I did not think a total silence inexcusable on this occasion; and I can the more freely do it, because I am truly conscious I have no other design in it, but to glorify God on your behalf, and to excite others, especially persons of distinguished birth and education, to an imitation of your noble example.

Your real piety towards God, your fervent love to the Members and Servants of Christ, your steady zeal for the pure doctrines of the glorious Gospel, and particularly at this day for the honour of the great God our Saviour, your true value for all ingenious studies, and your considerable improvements in them, your great civility to all, and every other ornament which adds to the lustre of your honourable birth, do appear so evidently to all who know you, that there is no danger
of

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

of flattery on my part, nor of elation on yours; for I know you are taught of God to ascribe whatever you are to his grace. It is true, *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called:* but some there are of this character, and those shine with a peculiar lustre.

How few of your quality improve their capacities and time in useful studies, or apply themselves to serious Religion, as you have done? And how few make their conversation so profitable, and pleasant as yours is, to all who have the happiness of enjoying it? For my part, I must acknowledge it one of the felicities of my life, that I have had the honour of a long acquaintance with your piety and learning; and it is no small satisfaction that I have this opportunity of a public declaration, how much I am obliged to your generosity and condescension for many favours, which will be preserved fresh in a grateful mind as long as I live.

I doubt not, but you are waiting with much desire and faith for your full redemption; and tho' you bow under the infirmities of eighty four years, yet your soul is mounting upwards, as on eagles wings, and the nearer you draw to the center, you feel the more powerful attractions of the love and glory of Christ.

That your useful and desirable life may yet be prolonged for the comfort of your family, and every day be attended with an increase of grace and peace; that the best blessings, *the good will*

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of

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

of him that dwelt in the bush, may be continually derived on yourself, and your posterity already propagated to the third generation, together with all the dear relatives of your family; that you may live in the constant views of approaching glory and immortality, and when you have finished your course, with full assurance enter into your Master's joy, is that earnest prayer, in which I am sure there are many who join with,

S I R,

Your most humble, affectionate,

and obedient Servant,

John Afty.



THE



THE PREFACE.



I *t is not our design in this place to in-*
large on the Character of Dr. OWEN, since
that is attempted in the following Memoirs
of his Life; but to give some particular
account of this Work, which contains a com-
plete Collection of his Sermons, and fe-
veral scarce Tracts, formerly printed, that being gathered
into one Volume they may be preserved entire to posterity.
With these are joined a considerable number of Sermons,
and other Tracts, never before publish'd; which
we do assure the public are genuine, a great part of
them having been transcribed from his own Copies, and
the rest taken from his mouth by a Gentleman of honour and
known integrity. We are far from thinking our recom-
mendation of this Work necessary to the Author's reputa-
tion, whose name and character have been so well known to
the learned World, and are yet so fragrant among the
Churches of Christ; but we offer it to the public, as truly
valuable,

THE PREFACE.

valuable, and what we hope, through the blessing of God, may prove very useful to revive the important truths of the Gospel, and the practice of real godliness, and to establish the faith and consolation of serious Christians.

We can give the reader this satisfaction, that there has been all due care taken in perusing and correcting the whole; and that for the greater accuracy of the Work, such original Manuscripts as are yet remaining, even of those Sermons which were formerly printed, have been consulted, which we chose rather to follow than the printed Copies, where any thing had been altered or omitted; so that both the Sermons, and other Tracts, are free from those many gross faults that have hitherto sullied them. Also the Essay on Church Government, and Discourse about Toleration, are put in their respective places, which we judged would be acceptable to many.

Some may perhaps wonder to find the beginning of the Memoirs of the Author's Life anticipated by one, who seem'd in haste to thrust out the printed Sermons into the world. The case in short is this: Many years ago that worthy Gentleman, to whom we are oblig'd for a great part of those Memoirs, did communicate so much as fills about a sheet of that imperfect work, that it might give some assistance to one then living, who was thought very capable of writing the Doctor's Life: but that design was frustrated, and that small part of the Memoirs not being recalled, the Bookseller has thought fit to publish it, with some additions put together by another hand; and the whole concludes with a quotation of twelve pages, placing that as a part of his History, which the reader may meet with in the Preface to his Meditations on the Glory of Christ; tho' the Compiler takes no notice of the Book from which he had it. We shall only say farther as to that performance, we wish they would not have hurried such an account of this great Man into the world, especially when they were not ignorant, that a larger History of his Life was design'd to be publish'd in due time.

The PREFACE.

As to the Funeral Sermon, it would have appeared to greater advantage, had it been taken more exactly. But since it was published before (though with several Additions to the written Copies) we thought proper to give it a place in this Volume, lest the omitting it should by any have been judged a deficiency.

We are satisfied it would be a very useful undertaking, as by many it is much desired, to publish all his Works in several Folio's of the same size with this. That design has been on foot, and we have no reason to desist from it, especially when such uncommon encouragement has been given to this Volume. We are sure, several of them would be very seasonable to oppose that torrent of infidelity, scepticism, and Arianism, with other dangerous notions, which at this day threaten to overflow the Church of God. This great champion made it his business to rase the foundation of the Socinian scheme, and to enervate their main strength, chiefly bending his studies to that controversy; as is sufficiently evident in his *Diatriba de justitia divina*, his Answer to Biddle, his Brief Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity, his Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, his *Χειρολογία*, or, The glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ, and some other Treatises.

He had all the advantages that could well be desired, for attaining to a clear and extensive knowledge of any subject, especially for understanding the mind of God in the Holy Scriptures: excellent natural parts, improv'd by a great variety of solid and useful learning, indefatigable studies, a long continuance in the celebrated University of Oxford, and for several years in the most eminent stations, where he had the command of the best of Libraries, and a conversation with men of the greatest learning, all happily meeting with a mind so very well disposed for the most useful performances; but above all he appears to have been eminently under the conduct of the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth; of which we cannot present to the world a stronger instance, than in his own words; 'tis indeed men-

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tioned

The PREFACE.

tioned in the Memoirs, but we may be excused in placing it here, as a lively character of this Man of God. "After
"all searching, and reading (says he) prayer, and assiduous meditation on the text, have been my only reserve,
"and far most useful means of light. Careful have I been,
"as of my life and soul, to bring no prejudicate sense to the words, to impose no meaning of my own, or other mens,
"nor to be imposed on by the reasonings, pretences, or curiosities of any; but always went nakedly to the word itself, to learn humbly the mind of God in it, and to express it as he should inable me". This was his method in that performance, and we have no reason to doubt, but he was as careful and conscientious in all his other works.

We have no more to add, but our hearty desires, that this Book may be sent out into the world with his blessing, who ministers seed to the sower, and gives the increase.

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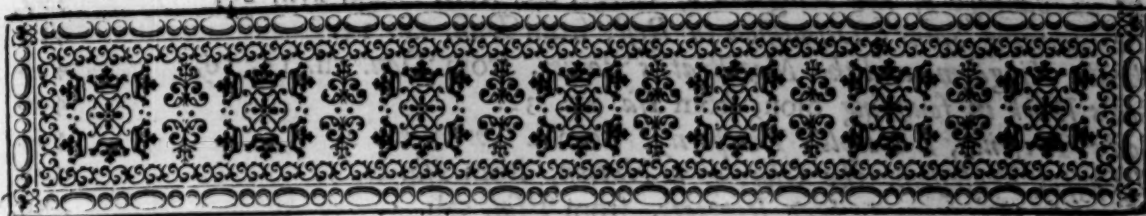
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ORATIONS.

* *Orationes sex Oxonii habitæ.*

(1)







MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF
JOHN OWEN, D.D.



We are very sensible of the great disadvantage which must necessarily attend our present design, in attempting to write the life of so eminent a person as Dr. Owen; since, at this distance of time, we can't pretend to be furnished with such a regular set of materials as are requisite to fill up his just character: for 'tis well known that the best actions often lose very much of their lustre, when the springs and motives from whence they flow lie conceal'd: and such is the unhappy turn of many, that they are apt to take every thing, which is capable of a misconstruction, in the worst light. Besides, in treating of persons lives, 'tis frequently necessary to trace their private conduct, known perhaps but to few, in order to shew its consistency with their more open and publick actions, that from the conjunction of both, such ideas may be naturally form'd, as will render them proper subjects of imitation; which is the principal advantage of these writings. But tho' such

a number and series of accounts can't now be come at, as would be necessary to furnish out a complete History of the Doctor's life, and represent him, as he really was, one of the greatest ornaments of the age wherein he lived; yet we doubt not but from this very short and imperfect account, every impartial reader will be led to think of him as an extraordinary person, considered either as a Gentleman, a Scholar, a Christian, or a Divine. The principal assistance we have received for this work, has been from the memoirs collected by a Gentleman of honour, and known integrity, an intimate friend of the Doctor, who had the greatest opportunity of knowing his affairs, both from his long acquaintance with him, and the inspection of his papers after his decease: and 'tis to him the publick is chiefly indebted, as well on this account, as for the preservation of several of his works. We have likewise been supplied with some farther accounts from others of the Doctor's friends. And to all these we have added such passages, as could be collected either from his own writings, or those of others, which might serve to illustrate his Life or Character. Care has been taken through the whole to offer nothing, but from very sufficient and authentic vouchers; and we have faithfully attended to those two rules, which *Tully* makes principally necessary in history: *Ne quid falsè dicere audeat, deinde; ne quid veri non audeat; ne qua suspicio gratiæ sit in scribendo: ne qua simulatio*. We have also endeavoured to use as plain and easy a stile as possible, without dress or ornament, as being most agreeable to the nature of history in general, and particularly to the gravity of the subject upon which we are now entring.

JOHN OWEN, of whom we now write, derives his pedigree from *Lewis Owen* of *Kwyn*, near *Dollegelle*, Esq; who was born to about 300*l. per Annum*, and lineally descended (according to *Lewis Dynn's* book) from a younger son of *Kewelyn ap Gwrgan*, Prince of *Glamorgan*, Lord of *Cardiffe*, this being the last family of the five regal Tribes of *Wales*. This Gentleman was Vice-chamberlain, and Baron of the Exchequer in *Northwales*, about the middle of the reign of *Henry VIII.* and continued so thro' the reigns of *Edward VI.* and *Queen Mary*, 'till the 8th year of *Queen Elizabeth*, in great credit and authority, as appears by their letters to him, and *John Wynn ap Meredith*, of *Guedir*, Esq; (in whose family those letters are kept) who jointly imployed their power in apprehending felons and outlaws, of whom there was a great number in those parts during the wars betwixt the houses of *York* and *Lancaster*. This *Lewis Owen* was High-Sheriff of the county of *Merioneth*; and being obliged to attend *Montgomery*-assizes, he went, and at the same time treated with the Lord of *Montbrey* for his daughter, in marriage with *John* his eldest son; but in his return fell in among some outlaws, being several brothers, called the *Gwillied cockion*, i. e. the red

Lib. II. de Orat. n. 15.
A Book of Records relating to the Antiquities of Wales.
 13
 robbers,

robbers, at a place called *Dúgoed*, near *Mowthwy*, and was shot thro' the head with an arrow. A plain cross was erected to the Baron's memory upon the place where he was murder'd: there are now no remains of this cross to be seen; only the gate, which the assassins had block'd up to obstruct his passage, is to this day called *Llidiart Croes y Baron*, i. e. *The gate of Baron's Cross*. Griffith, the fifth son of this Gentleman, had a daughter nam'd *Susan*, who was married to *Humphrey* of the same family, in another line. This *Humphrey* had fifteen sons, and the youngest, whose name was *Henry*, was father to JOHN OWEN, the subject of our history. This *Henry* was bred a scholar, and, having past thro' his academical studies at *Oxford*, was after some time chosen Minister at *Stadham* in that county; and reckon'd a strict puritan for his more than ordinary zeal in those early days of reformation. He married, had several children, and, after many years of reputation and service, died in a good old age.

JOHN was his second son, born at *Stadham*, in 1616. He had such an extraordinary genius, and made so quick a proficiency in his studies at school, that he was very early ripe for the University, being admitted into Queen's College at about twelve years of age; and when he was but nineteen, commenc'd Master of Arts, 1635. He pursu'd his studies with incredible diligence, allowing himself for several years not above four hours sleep in a night; so that he soon had made a considerable progress in learning. Sometimes he would, for the benefit of his health; use some recreations, but chiefly such as were violent and robust, as leaping, throwing the bar, ringing of bells, and such like exercises. While he continu'd in the College, his whole aim and ambition was to raise himself to some eminence in Church or State, to either of which he was then indifferent. It was his own acknowledgment since, concerning himself, that being naturally of an aspiring mind, affecting popular applause, and very desirous of honour and preferment, he applied himself very close to his studies, to accomplish these ends he had so much in view; and he was ready to confess with shame and sorrow, that then the honour of God, or serving his country, otherwise than he might thereby serve himself, were most remote from his intentions. Thus we may see and admire the wisdom of divine providence, that did overrule his natural genius and inclination, for the laying in such a stock of learning which was afterwards consecrated to the service of the Church of God; tho' he himself then design'd nothing less. His father having a large family, could not afford him any considerable maintenance at the University, but he was liberally supply'd by an uncle, one of his father's brothers, a Gentleman of a fair estate in *Wales*; who having no children of his own, design'd to have made him his heir. He liv'd in the College 'till he was twenty one years of age, from which time he met with extraordinary changes, which thro' the unsearchable wisdom of God, turn'd to his great advantage, and made way for his future advancement, and eminent usefulness.

Now there opens a surprizing scene, tho' at first very dark and gloomy, yet afterwards bright and pleasant; and when we observe the several steps of the divine conduct thro' this remarkable part of his life, wherein the great change upon his soul was begun and carried on by the Holy Spirit thro' amazing steps of melancholy and temptation, we may well conclude, that by an admirable variety of wisdom and grace, he was fitting for some eminent service; as indeed he afterwards proved one of the most useful instruments, and brightest ornaments in the Church of God.

About this time Dr. *Laud*, Archbishop of *Canterbury*, and Chancellor of *Oxford*, imposed several superstitious rites on the University upon pain of expulsion. Mr. OWEN had then received such light, that his conscience would not submit to those impositions; however temporal interest might plead for his compliance, yet other more weighty considerations of a religious nature prevailed; for now God was forming impressions of grace upon his soul, which inspired him with a zeal for the purity of his worship, and reformation in the Church. This change of his judgment soon discovered itself upon this occasion, and was observed by his friends, who thereupon forsook him as one infected with *Puritanism*; and upon the whole, he was become so much the object of resentment from the *Laudensian* party, that he was forced to leave the College. We must remember that about this time he was also exercised with many perplexing thoughts about his spiritual state, which joined with outward discouragements, threw him into a deep melancholy, that continued in its extremity for a quarter of a year; during which time he avoided almost all manner of converse, and very hardly could be induced to speak a word, and when he did speak, it was with such disorder as rendred him *a wonder to many*. Tho' his distress and melancholy did not abide in that violence, yet he was held under very great trouble of mind, and grievous temptations for a long time, and it was near five years before he attained to a settled peace; in which space the all-wise God, who design'd him for such eminent service, was perfecting his conversion, and at last *brought forth judgment unto victory*. His very great troubles and distresses of soul were succeeded with a great degree of lasting serenity and joy, which more than recompensed his past sorrows and difficulties.

WHEN the wars in *England* broke out, he own'd the Parliament's cause, which his uncle, who had maintain'd him at the College, being a zealous Royalist, so vehemently resented, that he turn'd him at once out of his favour, settled his estate upon another, and died without leaving him any thing. He liv'd then as Chaplain with a Person of Honour, who tho' he was for the King, us'd him with great civility; but he going at last to the King's army, Mr. OWEN left his house, and came up to *London*: he took lodgings in *Charter-house yard*, where he was a perfect stranger. At this place we must consider him as not yet freed from his melancholy and spiritual troubles; but now we may observe the wonderful method God took to work

a perfect cure on his mind, and ease him of all his fears and sorrows: and it was thus. He went one Lord's day with Mr. Owen, a cousin of his to *Aldermanbury* Church, with expectation of hearing Mr. Calamy. He waited for his coming up into the pulpit, but at length it was known that Mr. Calamy was prevented by some extraordinary occasion; upon which many went out of the Church, but Mr. OWEN resolved to abide there, tho' his cousin would fain have persuaded him to go and hear Mr. Jackson, then an eminent preacher in the city; it not being certain whether there would be any person to supply Mr. Calamy's place. Mr. OWEN being well seated, and too much indisposed for any farther walk, he resolved after some stay, if no preacher came, to go to his lodgings. At last there came up a country minister to the pulpit, a stranger not only to Mr. OWEN, but to the parish; who having prayed fervently, took for his text these words, *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith*, Mar. viii. 26. The very reading of the words surprized Mr. OWEN, upon which he secretly put up a prayer, that God would please by him to speak to his condition; and his prayer was heard; for in that sermon the minister was directed to answer those very objections which Mr. OWEN had commonly formed against himself: and tho' he had formerly given the same answers to himself without any effect, yet now the time was come when God design'd to speak peace to his soul; and this sermon (tho' otherwise a plain familiar discourse) was blest for the removing of all his doubts, and laid the foundation of that solid peace and comfort which he afterwards enjoy'd as long as he liv'd. It is very remarkable that Mr. OWEN could never come to the knowledge of this minister, tho' he made the most diligent enquiry. After such an account of this great work of God upon him, it is worth our while to stand and admire the gracious conduct of divine wisdom in preparing him thus for that eminent service in the Church, wherein he shin'd so bright to the end of his days. Here was a rich treasure of experience inlaid, which furnished him with a very great capacity of instructing others, and of giving proper advice and comfort to souls under spiritual distress, and of publishing to the fallen race of *Adam*, the riches of the glory of that mystery contain'd in the Gospel; and how much he excell'd in all the parts of his ministerial office, his various works do sufficiently proclaim. We can't but observe farther, that by these uncommon distresses, and very deep humiliations he pass'd thro', his natural vanity and ambition of which he complain'd, was effectually brought down, and a happy turn given to his mind, that inclined him to lay aside all affectation of the pomp of humane learning, and to preach the Gospel in all plainness and simplicity, which is the peculiar excellency of an evangelical minister. Now the cure was effected on his soul, his bodily health also was restor'd, which had been impair'd by his deep melancholy; tho' till then he scarce knew what sickness was, being of a strong constitution.

DURING his abode at the *Charter-house* he wrote his book call'd, *A Display of Arminianism*; which met with such an acceptance, as made way for his advancement. It came out in 1642, a very seasonable time, when those errors had spread themselves very much in this nation, so that the book was the more taken notice of, and highly approv'd by many. He dedicates it to the *Right Honourable the Lords and Gentlemen of the Committee for Religion*, to whom he complains, "How injurious these *Arminian* tenets are to the sovereign dominion of the great God over the hearts of men, and shews how *Justice* and *Religion* are the main columns of any state, how necessary in their conjunction *Truth* and *Peace* are to make the whole happy; for an agreement without truth is no peace, but a covenant with death, a conspiracy against the kingdom of Christ." He says farther, "This I have heard, that it was affirmed on knowledge in a former Parliament, that the introduction of *Arminianism* amongst us, was the issue of a *Spanish* consultation. It is a strange story that learned *Zanchius* tells us, how upon the death of the *Cardinal of Lorain*, there was found in his study a note of the names of divers *German* divines and ministers, being *Lutherans*, to whom was paid an annual pension by the assignment of the *Cardinal*, that they might take pains to oppose the *Calvinists*, and so by cherishing dissention, reduce the people again to Popery." And in his *Preface* he gives us the reasons of his undertaking: "Since these dangerous errors had taken such a spread among us, that it was high time to oppose this innovation:" and what is the main design and method of this treatise he declares in the first *Chapter*. Thro' the whole performance he has acquitted himself as a champion of truth, cutting in pieces the sinews of *Arminianism*, and establishing the pure Gospel doctrine with great force of argument. There were some considerable persons who had a just sense of the value of this work, and did not fail to give real and particular marks of their respect to so learned an Author. For soon after the publishing of it, the *Committee for purging the Church of scandalous ministers*, paid such a regard to it, that Mr. *White*, chairman of that *Committee*, sent a special messenger to Mr. *OWEN*, to present him the living of *Fordham* in *Essex*; which offer he the more chearfully embraced, as it gave him an opportunity for the stated exercise of his ministry: he went thither to the great satisfaction, not only of that parish, but of the country round about. He continu'd at this place about a year and a half, where his preaching was so acceptable, that people resorted to his ministry from other parishes; and great was the success of his labours in the reformation and conversion of many, thro' the hand of the Lord that was with him. Soon after he came to *Fordham*, he married a Gentlewoman (whose name we know not) by whom he had several children, all which the Doctor outliv'd. In 1644 he

published his discourse, *Of the duty of pastors and people*, in which he states the proper work of pastors, not to be invaded by the people; and also the just liberties of the people, shewing what means may and should be used by *them* (distinct from Church-officers) for the encreasing of divine knowledge in themselves and others; and thus he secures to the sacred calling of the ministry its ancient dignity, and to the Church of God their Christian liberty.

UPON a report that the sequestred incumbent of *Fordham* was dead, the Patron, who had no kindness for Mr. OWEN, presented another to the living; whereupon the people at *Coggeshall*, a market town about five miles from thence, earnestly invited him to be their minister, and the Earl of *Warwick*, the Patron, very readily gave him the living; which favour of opening a door for preaching the Gospel, in that place, he thankfully acknowledged, for here he taught a more numerous and judicious congregation, seldom fewer than two thousand, where he found the people generally sober, religious, and discreet: a very fervent affection was cultivated between minister and people, to their mutual joy and satisfaction; and here also he met with great success in his ministry, and with the universal approbation of the inhabitants, and of the country round about.

HITHERTO Mr. OWEN had followed the *Presbyterian* way; but he was put upon a more diligent enquiry into the nature of Church government and discipline; and it was no small advantage to him, that he had such intimate converse with knowing and experienced Christians. After a due search and study upon this head, he was fully convinced that the congregational way was most agreeable to the rule of the New Testament. His judgment in this matter has been printed, with the several reasons for it, in two *Quarto's* ^a, which if consulted without partiality, may give to many a better opinion of this order of Gospel Churches, and teach them not to slight or revile what they don't understand. Several ministers of the *Presbyterian* denomination were dissatisfied with this change of Mr. OWEN's judgment, and particularly Mr. *Cawdry* reproach'd him very unhand somely, to whom he gave a much more civil answer. He had formed a Church at *Coggeshall* upon these congregational principles, according to his own light, which continued long a flourishing Church, and subsists in a good condition to this very day. The worth of so great a man, so eminent a light, could no longer be concealed; his fame and reputation spread both thro' city and country. He was sent for to preach before the Parliament: This Sermon is entitled, *A Vision of free mercy, &c. on Acts xvi. 11. April 29, 1646* ^c. He pleads for liberty of conscience and moderation towards men of different persuasions, &c. in an Essay for the practice of Church-government in the country, which he subjoins to that sermon. In the year 1643 he published his book, entitled, *Salus elec-*

^a An Enquiry into Evangelical Churches, 1681. True Nature of Gospel Churches, 1689.

^c Sermon 29. in this Vol.

torum, sanguis Jesu: or, The death of death in the death of Christ. He dedicated this book to *Robert Earl of Warwick*, where he pays his tribute of thanks to his Lordship for that privilege of opening the door for his preaching the Gospel at *Coggeshall*; and in his *Preface* to the reader he tells us, "That this performance was the result of
 " more than seven years serious enquiry into the mind of God about
 " these things, with a perusal of all which he could attain, that the
 " wit of men in former or later days hath published in opposition
 " to the truth". It is a noble undertaking carried on with all the vigour of argument and learning, of which he himself was so conscious, that tho' the most modest and humble of all writers, yet he scrupled not to declare, that "He did not believe he should live to
 " see a solid answer given to it". In this book he has entirely demolished the doctrine of universal redemption, and fully established the satisfaction and merit of Christ's blood, in the accomplishment of God's eternal counsels for the salvation of the elect. There are attestations prefix'd to this treatise by two Reverend Ministers, Mr. *Stanley Gower*, and Mr. *Richard Byfield*.

COLCHESTER was about this time besieged, and the Lord *Fairfax*, General of the Parliament's forces, quartering at *Coggeshall* some days, he became acquainted there with Mr. *OWEN*, and likewise four Commissioners sent by the House down into *Essex*, to look after their affairs in that county, entred into a conversation with him. He preached two sermons, the one at *Colchester* on a day of thanksgiving for the surrender thereof, and the other at *Rumford* to the Committee that had been imprisoned by the enemy, *Sept. 28, 1648.* being a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance. These two sermons are entitled, *Ebenezer, A Memorial of the deliverance of Essex County and Committee; being an Exposition on the first nine verses of the third chapter of the prophecy of Habakkuk* &c. He was again required to preach before the House of Commons, *Jan. 31, 1648-49,* the very next day after the death of King *Charles*: his text was, *Jer. xv. 19, 20.* the management of which discourse deserves to be recorded as a perpetual monument of his great integrity and wisdom. He appeared before a numerous assembly; it was a critical juncture, and he was not ignorant of the tempers of his principal hearers; he was then a rising man, and to justify the late action was the infallible road to preferment. But his discourse was so modest and inoffensive, that his friends could make no just exception, nor his enemies take an advantage of his words another day. He was again sent for by the House to preach before them, *April 19, 1649.* his text was, *Heb. xii. 26, 27.* This sermon is entitled, *The shaking of Heaven and Earth.* It gave them great satisfaction, and after this time he was frequently called to the like service. In *June* following he preached upon another publick occasion before the Parlia-

¹ Sermon 30 in this Vol.

² Sermon 31 in this Vol.

³ Sermon 32 in this Vol.

ment, and army at *Christ's-Church*, the city having given them an invitation to dinner at *Grocer's-Hall*; but we believe this sermon was not printed. The next time of his preaching before them was on *Feb. 28, 1649.* when the officers of the army were also present: He discoursed upon those words, *Rom. iv. 20. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, &c.*¹ A very seasonable subject it was, and well improv'd by Mr. OWEN for that extraordinary occasion, being a day set apart for solemn humiliation and prayer throughout the nation: for the army was then intended for *Ireland*, to revenge the blood barbarously shed in that kingdom. It was a very important design, and not a little hazardous, the *Irish* being numerous, strong, and well fortified, having the command of the whole kingdom, *Dublin*, and a few places beside, excepted. Lieutenant General *Cromwell* was present, who had never heard Mr. OWEN preach before, and was extremely pleas'd with this discourse. Mr. OWEN design'd to go to his charge at *Coggeshall* within two days after; but he thought himself oblig'd to wait on the Lord General *Fairfax*, with whom he became acquainted at the siege of *Colchester*. When he waited on his Excellency, the servants told him, that he was so much indispos'd, that several Persons of Quality had been refused any converse with him; however, Mr. OWEN sent in his name, and desir'd that his Excellency might know, that he only came to tender his humble service, and an acknowledgment of the many favours he had receiv'd from him. In the mean time Lieutenant General *Cromwell*, with many officers, came in, and he spying Mr. OWEN, came up directly to him, and laid his hands on his shoulders in a familiar way, as though he had intimately known him, saying, *Sir, You are the person I must be acquainted with*; Mr. OWEN modestly return'd, *That will be much more to my advantage than yours*; Mr. *Cromwell* replied, *We shall soon see that*; and so taking him by the hand, led him into the Lord *Fairfax's* garden, and from this time contracted an intimate friendship with him, which continu'd unto his death. He acquainted Mr. OWEN with his intended expedition into *Ireland*, and desir'd his company there to reside in the College at *Dublin*; but he answered, the charge of the Church at *Coggeshall* would not permit him to comply with his request: Mr. *Cromwell* was not satisfy'd with the objection, and would have no denial; but at last from desires he proceeded to commands, and resolv'd he should go; at the same time telling him, that his younger brother (whom he dearly lov'd) was to go as Standard-Bearer in the same army: he not only engaged his brother to persuade him to a compliance, but also wrote to the Church at *Coggeshall*, to desire leave that he might go with him to *Ireland*; which letter was read publicly amongst them, yet they were utterly unwilling to part with him on this occasion; but at length Mr. *Cromwell* told them plainly,

¹ N. B. There are several sermons on this text, entitled, *The Strength of Faith*, added in this Vol. which complete the Doctor's design upon this subject.

he must and should go. Mr. OWEN consulted several ministers about it, and they all agreed in their advice for his going; upon which he prepar'd for his journey, not with the army, but more privately. He arrived at *Dublin*, and took up his lodgings in the College, preaching there, and overseeing the affairs of that eminent school of learning. Here he staid about half a year, and with Lieutenant General *Cromwell's* leave, return'd into *England*, and went to *Coggeshall*, where he was joyfully received. He had scarce time to take breath there, being soon after called to preach at *Whitehall*, which order he obeyed.

IN *September*, 1650. General *Cromwell* requir'd Mr. OWEN to go with him into *Scotland*, but he being averse to this journey also, the General procur'd an order of Parliament, which left no room for any objections. He staid at *Edinburgh* about half a year, and then returning into *England*, he went once more to his people at *Coggeshall*. * There are two sermons printed which he preach'd, the one at *Berwick*, and the other at *Edinburgh*, entitled, *The Branch of the Lord, the Beauty of Zion*, upon *Isa. lvi. 7.* for *mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people*. He hop'd upon his return to *Coggeshall* after this journey, to have spent the remainder of his days there; but God had prepared him other work; he must now leave his private service of being overseer to a congregation in the country, to preside over a College in *Oxford*, and after that over the University there. The first intelligence he had of this matter was by one of the weekly news-papers at *Coggeshall*; where he read words to this effect: "The House taking into consideration the worth and usefulness of Mr. *John Owen*, Student of *Queen's College*, Master of Arts, has order'd that he be settled in the Deanary of *Christ's College* in *Oxford*, in the room of" &c. and soon after he received a letter from the principal Students of that College, signifying their desire of his coming, and their great satisfaction in the choice the House had made of him to be their Dean. With the consent of his Church he went to *Oxford*, and settled there, in the year 1651. and in the following year he was chosen Vice-chancellor of that University; and admitted *Sept. 26, 1652.* in which office he continu'd successively five years. About this time also he was diplomated Doctor of Divinity.

HERE we must make a solemn pause, and admire a wonderful design of providence running through the space of ten years, which had by various steps advanc'd him to so great a reputation in public offices; and this conduct will appear still more remarkable, if we compare his present with his preceding circumstances. This is the man that was for his non-conformity driven from the College, deserted by his friends, disappointed of a good estate, seized with deep melancholy, exercised with spiritual troubles, sinking under bodily distempers, and grappling with other difficulties and hardships,

* Sermon 37 in this Vol.

now become Dean of *Christ's-Church*, and Vice-chancellor of that University, which for conscience sake he had been forced to quit. It would be an inexcusable defect in this history, not to take notice of that singular prudence, with which the Doctor (for so we must now call him) manag'd this honourable trust. He took care to restrain the loose, to encourage the sober and pious, to prefer men of learning and industry, and under his administration it was visible, that the whole body of that University was reduc'd into good order, and flourish'd with a number of excellent scholars, and persons of distinguish'd piety. When men are advanc'd to places of power and authority, they often discover a magisterial air, and severity of temper towards inferiors, and generally incline to be partial in the distribution of their favours; but we find a very different temper and carriage in the Doctor while he sat in this chair of honour: Among the several instances of his moderation, sweetness of disposition, and withal of his wisdom and gravity, which adorn'd him in the discharge of his office, we may take these few. It is well known that then the *Presbyterian* way was generally embrac'd and practic'd, and the persons with whom he most of all conversed in the University, were of that judgment: The Vice-chancellor has a power of disposing of several vacant livings, and at that time there were many such; and those that fell into his hands he generally gave to *Presbyterians*: Nor was he ever wanting to oblige even the Episcopal party, whom he suffer'd to meet quietly, about three hundred every Lord's day, over-against his own door, where they celebrated divine Service according to the Liturgy of the Church of *England*; and tho' he was often urged to it, yet he would never give them the least disturbance; and if at any time they met with opposition or trouble on that account, it was from other hands, and always against his mind.

THIS moderation and goodness of temper in the exercise of power, gain'd him the love and respect of the most; yet we must observe also, that he would not suffer authority to be slighted, when there was occasion to assert it; of which we may take the following instance. At an Act, when one of *Trinity College* was *Terræ-filius*, before he began the Doctor stood up, and in *Latin* told him, he should have liberty to say what he pleas'd, provided he would avoid profaneness and obscenity, and not go into any personal reflections. The *Terræ-filius* begun, and in a little time transgressed in all the foregoing particulars; upon which the Doctor did several times desire him to forbear those things that reflected such dishonour on the University, but notwithstanding he went on in the same manner: At length the Doctor seeing him obstinate, sent his beaules to pull him down; upon which the scholars interpos'd, and would not suffer them to come near him: Then the Doctor resolv'd to pull him down himself; his friends dissuaded him for fear the scholars should do him some mischief; but he reply'd, I will not see Authority thus trampled on; and hereupon he pull'd him down, and sent him to

Bocardo;

Bocardo; the scholars standing at a distance amaz'd to see his courage and resolution. At another time in *Lent*, as he was hearing the scholars disputing for their degrees, he took special notice of one of *Queen's College*, who was then but poor, but since has made a very considerable figure in the world: He disputed very accurately, and discover'd a more than ordinary share of parts and learning: The Doctor was very much pleas'd with him, and making enquiry, he understood his circumstances were mean, and gave him forty shillings to encourage him in his studies; and this Gentleman did ever after acknowledge the Doctor's kindness to him at that time. Thus we see, that while he restrain'd the loose and disorderly, he fail'd not to shew kindness to the sober and ingenious. He was hospitable in his house, generous in his favours, charitable to the poor, especially to poor scholars, some of whom he took into his family, and maintain'd them at his own charge, giving them academical education: particularly one time a poor scholar came, and sent him an Epistle in *Latin*, which the Doctor read, and perceiving a more than ordinary sharpness of wit in it, he sent for him in, and ask'd him if he wrote that letter: he affirmed, he did; well (said the Doctor) go into the next room, and write me another as good, and I will not be wanting to encourage you; which he did to the Doctor's great satisfaction; whereupon he took him into his house to teach his children; and afterwards he became an excellent School-master, and bred up several good scholars.

THUS we have given a short view of the Doctor's government while Vice-chancellor, which took up a great part of his time, together with other avocations which daily attended him in that station; yet notwithstanding all he redeemed time for his studies; preaching every other Lord's-day at *St. Mary's*, and often at *Stadham*, and other places in the country, and moreover he wrote some excellent books, of which we shall take notice in their order. In the year 1654 he publish'd his book of *The Saints Perseverance*, in answer to Mr. *John Goodwin's* book, *Redemption redeemed*. It is a masterpiece of this kind, full of close and strong reasoning, whereby he has over-ruled all the subtle arguments, and answered all the objections of the adversary, confirming the truth by the force of Scripture evidence; and in the whole has given the world an example of a rare Christian temper in the management of controversy. His Preface gives us an account of the entertainment this doctrine has had in all ages; what acceptance or opposition it has found among the professors of Christianity, down to the time when he wrote: There is a great variety in this Preface very useful, but chiefly calculated for the learned world. In the entrance of the book he tells us his own thoughts of the importance of this truth, which is at all times great, but especially in these days (says he) "wherein the wretched practices of many in their lives, and the industrious attempts of others in

“ their teachings, for the subverting and casting it down from its
 “ excellency, and that place it has long held in the Churches of
 “ Christ, and hearts of all the saints of God, have rendred the con-
 “ sideration of it at this time necessary: ” and he adds, “ In par-
 “ ticular the late studious endeavours of a learned man in his trea-
 “ tise, entitled, *Redemption redeemed*, to despoil the Spouse of
 “ Christ of this most glorious pearl, wherewith her beloved has
 “ adorn’d her, call for a particular consideration. ”

In 1655 he publish’d his book, *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ; or, The Mystery of the Gospel vindicated, and Socinianism examin’d*, which was chiefly design’d against *John Biddle*, a *Socinian*, who had publish’d two *Socinian Catechisms* of the same nature with the *Racovian*, written by *Valentinus Sinalcius*, which also the Doctor takes into examination, being willing to give a full confutation of *Socinian* errors. He tells us in his Epistle Dedicatory to the Heads and Governors of the Colleges and Hall’s in the University of *Oxford*, that complaint being made to the honourable Council, they sent for him, and requir’d him to answer these *Socinian Catechisms*; that tho’ fatigu’d with very great labours lately, particularly in writing against the *Arminians*, about the perseverance of the saints, he yet chearfully pursu’d this performance: It is a work that may be justly esteem’d very accurate and elaborate, wherein he has cut the sinews of the *Socinian* cause, and stabb’d it to the heart. There is a large Preface to the reader, wherein he gives a particular history of the opposition that has been made to the doctrine of the Trinity, especially of the Deity of Christ, his person and natures; he begins with *Simon Magus*, and his followers the *Gnostics* and *Valentinians*, who wholly overthrow’d the entire revelation of God, and his will, the Lord Jesus, and the Gospel; of the second rank he mentions *Cerintbus*, as the head with Judaizing *Ebion*, both denying expressly the Deity of Christ, asserting him to be a mere man: the most notorious patron of this madness was *Paulus Samosatenus*, Bishop of *Antioch*, Anno 272. and about fifty or sixty years after him follow’d *Photinus*, Bishop of *Sirmium*, who carried on the opposition against the Deity of Christ with great applause among that party. Then came on the deluge of *Arianism*, of which we have so large accounts in Ecclesiastical History. He observes that the *Socinians* refuse communion with the *Arians*, and will not be called after their name, not that their profession is better than theirs, but because they are not willing to partake of the prejudices they justly lie under. These heresies had in a great measure lain asleep for several ages, the Devil having another game to play, by another method of opposition to the glory of Christ in his mediatory office, by the *Roman Antichrist*: But when the appointed time of mercy was come, that God would visit the people, and begin to unravel this mystery of iniquity, by the Reformation so happily begun and carried on from the year 1517, Satan set on foot

his first design of opposing the eternal Deity of the Son of God, still remembering that the ruin of his kingdom arose from the Godhead of Christ's person, and the efficacy of his mediation. *Servetus* first appear'd in open blasphemy against the Son of God; but there soon arose a generation of men who carried on the opposition to the glory of his Deity with craft and virulence: their chief leaders were *Italians*, men of serpentine wits, *Georgius Blandrata*, *Petrus Sutorius*, *Franciscus Lismaninus*, who had been eminent in promoting the Reformation; and in a few years this abomination center'd in *Socinus*, who by learning, diligence, and craft, gave a vast spread to that heresy. It is worth our observation, what account the Doctor has in the Preface given of the horrid prevarication, and vile dissimulation of these heretics, in signing orthodox confessions, and renouncing the opposite errors, while they meant no such things; as afterwards appear'd. He gives us the instance of *Sutorius*, who was summon'd to a meeting of Ministers, upon an accusation that he deny'd that the Holy Spirit was to be invoked; but he secur'd himself under the shelter of dissimulation, subscribing this confession, *viz.* " I receive and reverence the Prophetical and Apostolical Doctrine, containing the true knowledge of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and freely profess, that God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ought to be worshiped with the same religion, or worship, distinctly, or respectively, and to be invoked according to the truth of the Holy Scriptures: and lastly, I do plainly detest every heretical blasphemy concerning God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whether it be *Arian*, *Servetian*, *Eunomian*, or *Stancarian*." This confession is to be seen in the Acts of the Convention at *Pinkzove*, Anno 1559. *Blandrata* also, an eminent physician in *Poland*, was guilty of the like hypocrisy; for being sent on the same occasion (as *Sutorius*) to the meeting at *Pinkzove*, Anno 1561. he subscribed this confession. " I profess myself to believe in one God the Father, and in one Lord Jesus Christ his Son, and in one Holy Ghost, whereof each is essentially God. I detest the plurality of gods, seeing to us there is one only God, indivisible in Essence. I confess three distinct persons, the Eternal Deity and Generation of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost true and eternal God, proceeding from them both." But though this man by his dissimulation thus escaped censure, and by his cunning insinuations obtain'd high promotions, and heap'd up great riches in the world, yet even in this life he escaped not the revenging hand of God: He was found at length with his neck broke in his bed; none knows by what means. And *Lismaninus*, the third person mention'd before, was accus'd of *Arianism*, at a convention at *Morden*, Anno 1553. and there acquitted by a Testimonial. But in the year 1561, in another meeting at *Whodrislave*, he was convicted of double dealing, and after that wholly fell off to the *Anti-trinitarians*; and at last drowned himself in a well. After the open breach in 1562, when these *Anti-trinitarians* separated themselves from the reform'd Churches,

Faustus

Fauftus Socinus, who built upon the foundation of his uncle *Laelius Socinus*, having seiz'd on all his papers which he was about to publish, had not divine Providence seasonably prevented it by his death: How *Socinus* carried on these pernicious heresies by an artful scheme, and by subtile methods, 'till he had gathered to himself, as the center and head, the whole droves of *Essentiaters*, *Tritheites*, *Arians*, and *Sabellians* that swarm'd in these times and places; how he publish'd his book, *De Jesu Christo Servatore*, Anno 1594. what progress his pernicious errors obtain'd, with the particular advantages he had above many for the spreading of them; it is worth while to read over the account given at large by the Doctor in that Preface. We shall conclude this extract with his observations concerning the way and method wherein these Heretics proceeded for the diffusing of their poison; and this we do the rather, because we may perceive how close others, who in our days have espoused or favoured the same errors, tread in their steps. *First*, At their first entrance upon their undertaking they prevail'd over some unwary men, by crying out that the Terms, Trinity, Person, Essence, Hypostatical Union, Communication of Properties, &c. were not found in the Scripture, and therefore to be abandon'd. They prevail'd for a while on the Churches of *Transilvania* to abstain from the use of these words; but they quickly perceived that tho' the words were not of absolute necessity to express the things themselves to the minds of believers, yet they were so to defend the truth from the opposition and craft of seducers: Nay, *Socinus* himself does not only grant, but prove, that in general this is not to be imposed on men, that the doctrine they assert is contain'd in Scripture in so many words, seeing it sufficeth that the thing itself pleaded for, be contain'd therein. The quotation out of *Socinus* to this purpose, is inserted in the margin of the Preface, p. 61. upon which the Doctor made this just remark. " This has made me (says he) a little marvel at the precipitate indigested conceptions of some, who in the midst of the flames of *Socinianism* kindling upon us, would tie us up to a form of confession composed of the bare words of Scripture in the order wherein they are placed. If we profess to believe that Christ is God blessed forever, and the *Socinians* tell us, true; but he is a God by office, not by nature; is it not lawful for us to say, nay; but he is God of the same nature, substance, and essence with his Father? If we shall say, that Christ is one with the Father, and the *Sabellians* tell us, true; they are every way one and in all respects, so that the whole Deity was incarnate; is it not lawful for us to tell them, that though he be one in nature and essence with his Father, yet he is distinct from him in person? " *Secondly*, Another artifice they use in advancing their own notions, is to take upon themselves the part of answerers, making cavils and objections, to avoid the arguments wherewith they are press'd, but do not care to draw out their own sentiments in plain assertions: this is their constant method, to fix wrong interpretations on Scriptures, and criticize

cize upon words. *Thirdly*, Their greatest triumphs are, in taking hold of what is usually among men applied to finite, created beings, and applying it to the infinite, uncreated essence of God; but it is most absurd and contrary to sound reason, that God and man, the Creator and creature, should be measur'd by the same rules, notions, and conceptions: and this one observation is sufficient to arm us against all their profound disputes about essence, personality, and the like. *Fourthly*, Their main cry runs against the usual words wherein the doctrines they oppose are taught and deliver'd: *They are not Scripture expressions*, &c. they don't oppose the things themselves; but they think them not so necessary as some suppose. Having got some ground by this on the minds of men, great stress is immediately laid on this, that a man may be saved tho' he believe not the doctrine of the Trinity, the satisfaction of Christ, &c. provided he live holily, and yield obedience to the precepts of Christ; so that it is mere madness and folly to break love and communion about such differences. By this engine (says the Doctor) I knew a choice society of Christians, through the cunning flights of one lying in wait to deceive, disturbed, divided, broken, and in no small part of it infected: if they once get this advantage, and have thereby weakned the love and valuation of the truth with any, they generally, through the righteous judgment of God, giving up men of light and vain spirits to the imaginations of their own hearts, overthrow their faith, and lead them captive at their pleasure. He tells us farther, that he might have distinctly insisted on their particular ways of insinuating their abominations, of the baits they lay, their devices, their high pretences to reason, and holiness or honesty in their lives, and also evinced that there are thousands in the papacy, and among the reform'd Churches, who are baptiz'd into their vile opinions and infidelity, though for the love of their temporal enjoyments, which are better to them than their religion, they profess it not. Finally, How this persuasion of theirs has been the great door whereby the flood of Atheism is broken in upon the world; and so he concludes with very seasonable cautions and advice to Ministers and Students in Divinity. It is necessary to observe, that the Doctor was well appriz'd of the *Socinian* arts, in pretending to use barely the words of Scripture for the concealing of their unsound opinions, and dangerous errors; though he sometimes has spoken in his writings against the abuse of new coin'd words, upon which too great stress has been laid in Councils and Synods in former ages, yet we may see his judgment was that it was necessary to use other words than those of Scripture syllabically, to express the sense of doctrines therein contain'd: to which purpose we may take the following passages out of his answer to *Biddle*. "Mr. B. knows, there
 "is no one of the Catechists whom he so decries, but directs them
 "whom he instructs to the Scriptures, and settles their faith on the
 "word of God alone; though they labour to help their faith and
 "understanding by opening it, whereunto also they are called, p. 9.
 Again

Again, p. 17. "If Heretics first begin to wrest Scripture expressions to a sense never receiv'd or contain'd in them, it is surely lawful for them who are willing to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, to clear the mind of God in his word by expressions and terms suitable thereunto." Farther he adds, p. 21. "This alone makes me put a value upon any word or expressions not ~~is~~ found in the Scriptures; namely, my observation, That they are question'd and rejected by none, but such as by their rejection intend and aim at the removal of the truth itself." Hitherto the eminent learning, prudence, and piety of this great man, had displaid their lustre in a public and honourable station; but the time was now come when he must retire to a more private capacity, wherein he failed not to preserve and improve the same excellent qualifications, and spread his usefulness both from the pulpit and the press. About this time he publish'd that excellent book, entitled, *Communion with God*, of which we need say the less, since it has for so many years recommended itself to the spiritual taste of serious and judicious Christians: and in it the Author has given sufficient evidence, that he was himself very intimately acquainted with a life of communion with God. He was Vice-chancellor of the University 'till 1657, when he gave place to Dr. Conant; and in the year 1659, Dr. Edward Reynolds, afterward Bishop of Norwich, succeeded him in the Deanary of Christ-Church: nor can we wonder at these changes that happen'd to a particular person, when so great alterations in the whole Government were moving on, 'till they issu'd in the Restoration of King Charles II.

September 3, 1658. Oliver Cromwell died, and his Son Richard was made Protector of the Commonwealth, but did not long continue in that high station: The officers of the army brought in the members of the old Parliament, who compell'd him to resign. These were turn'd out by Lambert, and a Committee of safety erected: But they were soon after brought in again by General Monk, with the secluded members, who when they met voted for a new Parliament to sit at Westminster; and these were the instruments that brought in the King. We were oblig'd to take notice of these things (tho' 'tis the Doctor's Life, not the history of his times which we are concern'd about) because he is suppos'd, by the interest he had in some officers of the army who met at Wallingford-House (of which some few were members of his Church) to have had a chief hand in the alteration of the Government which happen'd at that time. To his art of persuasion it seems this change was owing, and it is insinuated, that this was done out of party-zeal, or resentment, because his friends were not permitted to hold the reins in their own hand. This charge is brought against him in a book entitled, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*. "The army set up Richard Cromwell, it seems, upon trial, resolving to use him as he behav'd himself; and tho' they swore fidelity to

“ him, they meant to keep it no longer than he pleased them; and
 “ when they saw that he began to favour the sober people of the
 “ land, to honour Parliaments, and to respect the ministers whom
 “ they called *Presbyterians*, they presently resolved to make him
 “ know his Masters, and that it was *they*, and not *he* that were called
 “ by God to be the chief Protectors of the interest of the nation.
 “ He was not so formidable to them as his father was, and therefore
 “ every one boldly spurned at him. The Fifth Monarchy Men fol-
 “ low’d Sir *Henry Vane*, and raised a violent and clamorous party
 “ against him among the sectaries in the city: *Rogers* and *Feak*, and
 “ such like firebrands, preach’d them into fury, and blew the coals;
 “ but Dr. OWEN, and his assistants did the main work: He gather’d
 “ a Church at Lieutenant General *Fleetwood’s* quarters at *Walling-*
 “ *ford-House*, consisting of the active officers of the army. (This
 “ Church-gathering has been the Church-scattering project.) In
 “ this assembly it was determin’d that *Richard’s* Parliament must
 “ be dissolv’d, and then he quickly fell himself. Again, Part III.
 “ pag. 42. it is said, that Dr. OWEN was the chief that headed the
 “ *Independents* in the army with the greatest height, confidence,
 “ and applause; and that he was the great persuader of *Fleetwood*,
 “ *Desborough*, and the rest of the officers of the army, who were
 “ his gather’d Church, to compel *Richard Cromwell* to dissolve his
 “ Parliament.” Mr. *Baxter* has not oblig’d the world by producing
 his vouchers for it, which method in the like instances he calls
 slander; and it seems strange he should so easily forget what he him-
 self delivers in his *Christian Directory* p. “ Every honest man’s word
 “ is not presently to be believ’d; you must know whether it be a
 “ thing that he saw, or is certain of himself, or a thing which he
 “ taketh only upon report: what his evidence or proof is, &c.”
 And among several rules Mr. *Baxter* gives in the aforesaid book,
 this is one, viz. “ Involve not yourselves in any faction, religious
 “ or secular; so full of horrid, impudent lies are the writings of
 “ many sects, against those who were their chief opposers, that I
 “ still admonish all posterity to see good evidence for it, before they
 “ believe the hard sayings of any factious Historian or Divine against
 “ those that are against his party: It is only men of eminent conscience,
 “ candor, and veracity, and impartiality, who are to be believ’d in
 “ their bad report of others, except where notoriety or very good evi-
 “ dence does command belief above their own authority or veracity.”
 ’Tis pity Mr. *Baxter* did not publish this account in the Doctor’s
 life-time, for then doubtless he would have set the matter in a just
 light; but since ’tis otherwise, we must take leave to observe, that
 Historians, on whose credit we receive an account of the transactions
 of those times, are silent as to this matter; particularly *Whitlock* in
 his impartial Memoirs (as Mr. *Baxter* himself calls them^a) says no-
 thing of it; and it may be party-zeal (to speak the best of it) might

^a Vid. his *Apology*, p. 112.

^b P. 132. *Christian Directory*.

^c *Penitent Confess.* p. 63.

carry that reverend Author beyond his evidence; but to all such intimations we shall subjoin the Doctor's own vindication of himself, which considering his known character in the world, will (we hope) obtain credit beyond unattested assertions to the contrary. It seems the popish Author of a book entitled, *Fiat lux*, had charg'd the Doctor with having had a hand in the late troubles in the nation, and affirm'd (*they are his own words*) "That he was part of that dismal tempest which overbore all before it, not only Church and State, but reason, right, honesty, all true religion, and even good nature too". To this the Doctor replies with just reflections on the Author's desperate malice, and vindicates himself in these words, *viz.* "To deliver you, if it may be, from the like mis-carriages for the future, let me inform you, that the Author of the Animadversions is a person that never had a hand in, nor gave consent to the raising of any war in these nations, nor to any political alteration in them, no, not to any one that was amongst us during our revolutions; but he acknowledges that he liv'd and acted under them the things wherein he thought his duty consisted, and challenges all men to charge him with doing the least personal injury to any man, professing himself ready to give satisfaction to any one that can justly claim it". We have also another testimony of his own innocence in this matter, in his answer to that slanderous book, whereof one *Vernon*, a High Church Clergyman in *Gloucestershire*, was the Author, which Libel was answer'd by Sir *Thomas Overbury*, and by the Doctor distinctly. He brings the same charge against the Doctor as Mr. *Baxter* has done; and what does the Doctor reply? "Of the same nature (says he) is what he affirms, p. 18. of his Libel, of my being the instrument in the ruin of *Richard Cromwell*, with whose setting up, and pulling down, I had no more to do than himself, and the same answer must be return'd again, (as to the Friar) *Mentitur impudentissime*". To all this we may add the testimony of the Reverend Mr. *James Forbes*, of *Gloucester*, in a letter to a minister now living in *London*, wherein he writes thus: "There is yet a worthy minister alive, who can bear witness that Dr. OWEN was against the pulling down of *Richard Cromwell*, for there came a person to him with this request; You must preach for Dr. OWEN such a day in the Chapel at *Whitehall*, for he is sick, and is not able to preach, and the cause of his present illness is his dissatisfaction at what they are doing at *Wallingford-House*, with respect to the Protector. This minister is my intimate friend and acquaintance; and this he gave me under his hand". Having set this matter in this just light, we doubt not, but every impartial reader will think the Doctor is sufficiently vindicated from a charge that was not supported by any evidence, and appears not to have the least foundation.

* Vindic. of his *Animadversions* on *Fiat lux*, p. 10.

* P. 12.

OCTOBER 1658. Whereas it was thought necessary by the Churches of Christ, which were of the congregational way, to draw up a confession of their faith and order, there met at the *Savoy* about two hundred pastors and messengers of Churches for that purpose; for a more particular account of the reasons which moved them to enter upon this work, the method of their management, the entire harmony, and universal accord among so many persons concern'd in it, without having held any correspondence together, or prepar'd consultation, together with several other observable circumstances relating to it, we refer the reader to that large Preface in the *quarto* edition of this Confession: Nor is it our design to say any thing concerning this joint declaration of their faith, besides what is necessary for the vindicating of Dr. OWEN's memory from an unjust aspersion Mr. *Richard Baxter* has cast upon him, or rather, as one would think, on the Synod itself, with relation to it. A full vindication of the Doctor in this point we have in writing under the hands of two eminent Divines, who were members of that venerable Assembly, and were thoroughly acquainted with the whole proceeding. Mr. *Baxter* in his book entitled, *Catholick Communion defended*, written against a manuscript paper of Dr. OWEN's, after the Doctor's death, printed by Mr. *Thomas Parkhurst*, 1684, has the following passage in it, concerning the composers of the *Savoy*-Confession, pag. 8. Part V. of that book. "The *Independents* gather'd a Synod at the *Savoy*, and there among their doctrinals, or articles of faith, laid down two points expressly contrary to Scripture. (1.) That it is not faith, but Christ's righteousness that we are justify'd by, whereas it is both; and the Scripture often says the contrary. (2.) That Christ's righteousness imputed is our sole righteousness; whereas the Scripture does many hundred times name also our inherent righteousness. I ask'd some yet living, why they consented to these, and did not rather expound the Scripture, than deny it? and they said, It was Dr. OWEN's doing". Thus far Mr. *Baxter*: In answer to which Mr. *George Griffith*, a worthy minister, whose memory is precious among the Churches of Christ, gave the following declaration but a few weeks before his death, under his own hand; which original paper is now in our custody; and is here transcrib'd.

"I do declare, upon my own certain knowledge, having been a member of the *Savoy* meeting, and thoroughly acquainted with all matters of moment that pass'd in it, from first to last, that what Mr. *Baxter* here says about the two aforesaid articles being put into the *Savoy*-Confession by Dr. OWEN's doing, is altogether false, and that whoever made this report to him, has done a great injury to that Assembly, wherein nothing was laid down as any part of their confession, which was not first debated, duly weigh'd, approv'd, and agreed to by all, and more especially in the great and important doctrine of justification. I thought it my duty to

" leave

“ leave this attestation under my own hand, to clear the aforesaid
 “ meeting of worthy ministers, and faithful brethren, from such
 “ a foul aspersi^on, and unjust accusation, as Mr. *Baxter*, from the
 “ pretended information of others, lays them under; and this I do
 “ with the greatest regard to truth, as one daily expecting my change,
 “ and to stand before my Judge; and therefore, I hope, under no
 “ temptation to favour any party or persuasion of men thro’ sinful
 “ partiality.

G. Griffith.

We have also an original letter of Mr. *James Forbes* of Gloucester, written several years ago to a minister now living in London, about the same subject; which gives not only a full confutation of this charge, but also a particular account of that Assembly, and their proceedings, which otherwise might have been buried in oblivion. Out of which take the following extract to our present purpose.

“ In general I do in the *first place* declare, with all the solemn seriousness as the case requires, that though I am now, through the
 “ goodness of God, turn’d of seventy, and in the days of my pilgrimage have had occasion to be present at several Synods, and
 “ meetings of ministers, and messengers of Churches, there was
 “ the most eminent presence of the Lord with those who were then
 “ assembled, that ever I knew since I had a being; the like I never
 “ saw before, nor since, and I question whether I shall see the like
 “ on this side glory: It was a kind of heaven upon earth, I think,
 “ to all who were present. The great thing transacted by them,
 “ was the penning of that confession of faith, soon after printed
 “ and publish’d to the world, which the learned *Hoornbeck* translated
 “ into *Latin*. The method taken by the Assembly for the better
 “ expediting that business, was this: There was a Committee of
 “ such as were judg’d most eminent, who were to draw up the heads
 “ of the confession, viz. Dr. *Thomas Goodwin*, Mr. *Philip Nye*,
 “ Mr. *William Bridge* of Yarmouth, Dr. OWEN, then of Oxford,
 “ Mr. *Joseph Caryl*, Mr. *William Greenhill*; while they were employ’d in this grand and important affair, the Synod were employ’d in hearing and determining all cases that came before them; wherein the variety both of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost did conspicuously shine in great brightness and glory. The particular heads of the confession consider’d and agreed upon by the Committee, were every day brought in to the Assembly, and read by Mr. *George Griffith*, scribe to the Synod; such rare elaborate speeches my ears never heard before, nor since: All along from first to last there was a most sweet harmony both of hearts and judgments amongst them: Mr. *How*, then Chaplain to *Richard* the Protector, sat with them. We had some days of prayer kept from morning to night; when one had pray’d (I speak the truth, and lie not) I have thought no one could outdo that person, and
 “ so

“ so in preaching, yet ordinarily they who succeeded did excel, if
 “ possible, those who went before. When that book, *Reliquiæ*
 “ *Baxterianæ* came out, I read it, and I met with some things which
 “ did greatly offend me, because I knew them to be contrary to
 “ truth. He tells the world, the *Independents* could not be brought
 “ to accommodate with the *Presbyterians*, but to shew their own
 “ strength and numbers, they must needs meet in a Synod by them-
 “ selves, and publish a confession of their faith. I can safely and
 “ honestly witness, that the grand thing design’d by their coming
 “ together, was to let the *Presbyterians*, and our little world here
 “ know, how much one they were with their brethren the *Presby-*
 “ *terians*, and in order thereunto in matters of faith, they took up
 “ that which was their confession, and made it theirs, that so it
 “ being manifest whatever difference there was, it was only in some
 “ minute disciplinary points: therefore for time to come they should
 “ lay aside all prejudices, heats, and animosities, that the things
 “ wherein they agreed being of far greater power to unite, than the
 “ things wherein they differ’d to disunite them; in the things wherein
 “ they were agreed they should walk together, and in the things
 “ wherein they differ’d they should exercise a brotherly forbearance
 “ one towards another, according to *Phil. iii. 15.* and *James iii.*
 “ *17.* Mr. *Baxter* is pleas’d to say, that in the point of justification
 “ they differ from other Protestants: Whereupon I immediately had
 “ recourse to the harmony of confessions, and consulted all, or
 “ most of them; and I can easily make it appear that herein he is
 “ greatly mistaken.

BUT to return to the series of our history: the Doctor had quitted
 his publick station at *Oxford*, and retir’d to *Stadham*, the place of his
 birth in that county, where he was possess’d of a good estate: Here he
 liv’d privately for some time, ’till the persecution grew so hot, that he
 was oblig’d to remove from place to place, and at last came to *Lon-*
don. All which time he was not idle, but employ’d his talents like
 a faithful servant of Christ, in preaching as he had opportunity,
 and in writing several valuable and useful books, to serve the com-
 mon interest of Religion and Learning.

IN the year 1661 he publish’d that elaborate and learned treatise,
De naturâ, ortu, progressu & studio veræ Theologiæ, which was
 afterwards reprinted at *Bremen* in *Germany*. Concerning the nature and
 design of this book, we may take the account in his own words: “ *Præ-*
 “ *missis quæ ad nomen — de ejus studio dissertation. Prefat. ad finem.*
 “ In the former books of this treatise our design (says he) is to set
 “ forth the first rise of true Theology, the progress it made in several
 “ degrees of divine Revelation, together with the defection of many
 “ from its, and their errors, and also the change of the worship of
 “ the Church that had been cultivated according to the rule of that
 “ Revelation; with the manifold apostacy of the same Church,
 “ and its gracious reformation, even down to the last and final re-
 “ jection of the *Jewish Church*; and through the whole we have
 “ observ’d

“ observ’d the series of the several events which we have disposed
 “ into their fixed proper periods. In the pursuit of this design many
 “ things most worthy of our consideration did frequently occur,
 “ especially that famous Reformation of the *Jewish Church* after
 “ the captivity by *Ezra*; upon which occasion we found it necessary
 “ to discourse of many things relating to the antiquities and rites
 “ of that Church. Lastly, we have attempted to explain the true
 “ Evangelic Theology; and there we have shewn from the Scrip-
 “ tures themselves what it is, and what is its distinct nature, who
 “ are fit and prepar’d for the study of it, who only may be suppos’d
 “ to attain to it, and by what means; what are the main obstacles
 “ against it; together with the nature, institution, and government
 “ of the Church, which is founded upon it; and a dissertation about
 “ the study of this Theology concludes the whole work”. From
 this account we may easily perceive that this is a work of no small
 pains and time, containing a vast compass of reading, and variety
 of learning. The next year there came out a book, call’d *Fiat lux*,
 written by *John Vincent Lane*, a *Franciscan Friar*; wherein under the
 pretence of recommending moderation and charity, he with a great
 deal of subtilty invites men over to the Church of *Rome*, as the only
 infallible cure of all Church divisions; two impressions of this book
 were printed off before the Doctor had seen it; at length it was sent
 him by a Person of Honour, who desir’d him to write an answer to
 it; which he did in a very short time: This answer bears the title
 of *Animadversions on Fiat lux by a Protestant*; which being gene-
 rally accepted, made the Friar very angry, so that he publish’d a
 sheet or two by way of reply, which produc’d the Doctor’s answer,
 entitled, *A Vindication of Animadversions on Fiat lux*, to which never
 any reply was given. There was some difficulty in obtaining a li-
 cence for this last book, when the Bishops who were appointed by
 Act of Parliament the principal licensors of Divinity-Books had ex-
 amin’d it: They made two objections against it. (1.) That upon
 all occasions when he mentions the Evangelists and Apostles, even
 St. *Peter* himself, he left out the title of Saint. (2.) That he en-
 deavours to prove, that it could not be determin’d that St. *Peter* was
 ever at *Rome*. To the first, the Doctor replied, that the title of
Evangelist, or *Apostle*, by which the Scripture names them, was much
 more glorious than that of *Saint*; for in that name all the people
 of God were alike honour’d; yet to please them he yielded to that
 addition; But as to the other objections, he would by no means
 consent to any alteration, unless they could prove him to be mistaken
 in his assertion, and rather chose his book should never see the
 light, than to expunge what he had written upon that subject; and
 in all probability it had never been printed, had not Sir *Edward*
Nicholas, one of His Majesty’s Principal Secretaries of State, who
 was inform’d of this matter, wrote to the Bishop of *London* to li-
 cence it notwithstanding this objection. This book recommended
 him to the esteem of the Lord Chancellor *Hyde*, who, by Sir *Bul-*
strode

strove Whitlock sent for him, and acknowledg'd the service of his late books against *Fiat lux*; assuring him that he had deserv'd the best of any *English* Protestant of late years; and that for these performances the Church was bound to own and advance him; and at the same time he offer'd him preferment if he would accept it: The Chancellor moreover told him, there was one thing he much wonder'd at, that he being so learned a man, and so well acquainted with Church-history, should embrace that novel opinion of Independency, for which, in his judgment, so little could be said. The Doctor reply'd, that indeed he had spent some part of his time in reading over the history of the Church, and made this offer to his Lordship, if he pleas'd, to prove that this was that way of government which was practic'd in the Church for several hundred years after Christ, against any Bishop he should think fit to bring to a disputation with him upon this subject. Say you so (said the Chancellor) then I am much mistaken. Other discourses pass'd between them, particularly about liberty of conscience: The Lord Chancellor ask'd him what he would desire with respect to liberty and forbearance in the matters of Religion: to which the Doctor reply'd, That the liberty he desir'd was for Protestants, who assented to the doctrine of the Church of *England*. How the Chancellor related this passage is not known, but in all probability from hence was that calumny rais'd on the Doctor, as if he would have no other persons permitted to live in *England*, which he never said nor thought; yea, upon all occasions he has constantly declared it as his judgment, that no peaceable persons holding the foundation of the Christian Faith, ought by the rule of the Scriptures, or right reason, to have any violence offer'd to them for their profession of Religion in the exercise of their consciences towards God; and tho' he had sufficient reason at that time to make his proposal for such Protestants, yet he did it not then, or at any time, with any design of severity on others, nor would give so much as any tacit consent to the persecuting of any peaceable persons for the profession of their faith, and their worshipping of God according to their consciences. But notwithstanding all the good service he had done the Church of *England* in his answers to *Fiat lux*, he was still persecuted from place to place, which perpetual trouble inclin'd him to think of leaving his native country, having receiv'd an invitation from his brethren in *New-England* to come thither; and in 1665 he made preparations for that voyage: but the providence of God diverted him from that purpose: for now the dreadful plague was begun, which swept away above 100000; and the lamentable fire broke out in our Metropolis, that consumed so great a part of it. With these remarkable judgments did God visit upon the nation their many sins, among which we may reckon the penal laws that were prosecuted against their Protestant brethren; and this was so obvious and just an observation, that the Lord Chancellor *Hyde* himself said, when he was flying from *England* into *France*, being impeach'd by the

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House of Commons with whom he had joined with a great deal of vigour in those several Acts, *that his affairs never prospered after the Oxford Act.* The inhabitants of this land were startled by these awakening judgments of God, so that there was a cessation for some time from the prosecution of the laws against the Dissenters; and not long after his Majesty's Declaration of Indulgence to his Protestant-dissenting subjects came out, and licenses were granted to all, that desired them, for public Assemblies, all penal Laws being suspended: upon this the Church of *England* being alarmed, bestir'd themselves with hopes of success at the next meeting of the Parliament, and were not disappointed. The Doctor, who had lived privately in *London* for some years, went to visit his old friends at *Oxford*, and to attend some affairs of his own estate not far from thence; but, notwithstanding all his privacy, he was observed, and intelligence was given of the very house where he lay: upon which some troopers came and knocked at the door; the mistress of the house came down and boldly opened the door, asking, What they would have? who thereupon inquired of her, Whether she had any lodgers in her house? Instead of giving a direct answer to the question, she asked, Whether they were seeking for Doctor *Owen*? Yes, said they; she told them, He went from my house this morning betimes. Then they immediately rid away: in the mean time the Doctor, who she really thought had been gone (as he told her he intended) arose and went into a field near the house, whither he ordered his horse to be brought, and so rode away presently to *London*. Fresh invitations were now given him to go to *New England*, but he had too great a love for his native country, to quit it so long as there was any opportunity of being serviceable here; whilst the liberty continued, he was assiduous in preaching; and it was no small encouragement that now the people who had been awakened by the several judgments that they had felt in so sensible a manner, and convinced of the peaceableness of the Nonconformists, of enemies now became their friends, and advocates; being ready to protect those whom they used to persecute. Now the Doctor had opportunity of preaching publicly, and setting up a lecture, to which many Persons of Quality and eminent citizens resorted; and his time was filled up with other useful studies, which produced several valuable books, both learned and practical. We have taken notice of some of the most considerable, and intend to give an account of several others in their order, which may deserve a more particular observation.

IN the year 1668 he published that excellent exposition of the *cxxx Psalm*, which has had its praise in all the Churches. It was calculated for the service of poor distressed souls in their depths of spiritual trouble; there he has treated largely of Gospel forgiveness; and in the whole he has with all plainness, yet with a most

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penetrating spiritual judgment consulted the relief of such souls, who of all persons in the world stand most in need of compassion; and we shall only add that it is a book that has been blest for the advantage and comfort of many, and ever grateful to the spiritual taste of all good persons.

IN this year also he gave another blessing to the Church of God in publishing the first volume of his exposition on the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, and the three other followed in their order, the last coming out in 1684. It is not easy for us to give a full account of the value and usefulness of this work, it is filled with a great variety of learning, particularly Rabbinical, which he has made serviceable to give light into the subject matter chiefly treated of in this Epistle; and withal he has taken care to adapt his exposition to the service of the faith and comfort of Christians, and to recommend the practice of the substantial duties of Religion, so that it is hard to say, whether the Scholar or the Divine shine brightest, thro' this excellent work. He speaks of it himself in these words. "It is now sundry years since I purposed in my self, if God gave life and opportunity, to endeavour according to the measure of the gift received, an Exposition of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*; and in the whole course of my studies have not been without some regard thereunto: but yet I must now say that after all, searching and reading, prayer and assiduous meditation on the text have been my only reserve; careful I have been as of my life and soul to bring no prejudicate sense to the words, to impose no meaning of my own, or other mens upon them, nor to be imposed on by the reasonings, pretences, or curiosities of any; but always went nakedly to the word it self, to learn humbly the mind of God in it, and to express it as he shall enable me." The whole performance shews him to be an interpreter one among a thousand. Besides the Exposition it self there are very learned and accurate exercitations, which serve to illustrate many difficult parts of Scripture, and to answer the design of the whole work; we shall only observe farther, that here the Doctor has enumerated all the arguments, and answered all the main objections of the *Socinians*, overthrown entirely their whole scheme, and driven them out of the field; so that whoever reads this work needs scarce any other for the assailing of their pernicious errors.

ABOUT the sitting of the Parliament Nov: 1669, Mr. Samuel Parker wrote his discourse of Ecclesiastical Polity; and the power of the Civil Magistrate in the matters of Religion. It was first preached in the Chapel at *Lambeth*, and afterwards printed by the Archbishop of *Canterbury's* order. Upon which the man was so puffed up with his own vanity, as to say to the Earl of *Anglesea*, "Let us see, my Lord, whether any of your Chaplains can answer it." Doctor OWEN undertook it, and gave such an answer, as he could return no other reply to but railing, and this performance advanced the

the Doctor's reputation very much. Afterwards that ingenious person Mr. *Andrew Marvell*, wrote against Mr. *Parker's* book in a very witty satyrical way, which laid him flat on his back. There was nothing done this session of Parliament against the Dissenters, but at their next meeting they fell upon them with a great deal of fury, and drew up a severer Bill than ever, which with some difficulty was at length past: when the Bill was sent up to the Lords and debates arose upon it, the Doctor was desired to draw up some reasons against it in the intended severity of it: He did so, and it was laid before the Lords by several eminent Citizens and Gentlemen of distinction: This paper is called, *The State of the Kingdom, with respect to the present Bill against Conventicles*, printed in this Vol. but it did not prevail: the Bill was carried, and past into an Act; all the Bishops were for it but two, viz. Dr. *Wilkins* Bishop of *Chester*, and Dr. *Rainbow* Bishop of *Carlisle*, whose names ought to be mentioned with honour for their great Moderation. This was executed with severity to the utter ruin of many persons and families.

His discourse concerning the holy Spirit which he published in 1678 comes next under our particular observation; "It is
 " a subject very difficult to manage, being in it self abstruse
 " and mysterious (as he himself observes in the preface) and be-
 " sides the opposition to it has been carried on with much scorn
 " and public contempt." At that time the opposition to the Deity, and personality of the Holy Ghost, and all his operations with respect to the new Creation rose to a very great height, and happy it was for the Church of God, that this excellent person was raised up, who was so well fitted to explain and defend this Doctrine. He has told us in the preface, that he knew not of any, that ever went before him in the design of representing the whole oeconomy of the holy Spirit, with all his adjuncts, operations, and effects: the necessity and importance of treating thus fully of that subject is evident from the nature of it; for in all the dispensations of God towards his people there is no good communicated to them, nothing of worth or excellency wrought in them but by the holy Spirit. It is the Doctor's own observation, "that tho' the contra-
 " dictions of some in former ages had been fierce and clamorous,
 " yet all that has fallen out of that kind has been exceeding short
 " of what is come to pass in the days wherein we live. For not
 " to mention the *Socinians* who have gathered into one head, or
 " rather ulcerous impostume, all the virulent oppositions made to
 " his Deity, or grace by the *Photinians*, *Macedonians*, and *Pelagi-
 " ans* of old, there are others who professing no enmity to his
 " divine Person, yea admitting and owning the doctrine of the
 " Church concerning it, are yet ready on all occasions to despise
 " and reproach the whole work, for which he is promised under
 " the Old Testament, and which is expressly assigned to him in the

“ New. Hence it is grown among many a matter of reproach
 “ and scorn for any one to make mention of his grace, or to pro-
 “ fess that work of his *as his*, without which no Man shall see
 “ God, if the Scripture be a faithful testimony. “ The Doctor adds,
 “ To obviate those evils, to vindicate the truth and reality of di-
 “ vine spiritual operations in the Church, to avow what is believed
 “ and thought by them concerning the holy Spirit and his work,
 “ who are most charged and reflected on for their profession there-
 “ of, &c. and to manifest in all instances that what is ascribed to
 “ him is not only consistent with Religion, but also that without
 “ which Religion cannot consist, nor in the power of it be pre-
 “ served, is the principal design of these discourses.” We cannot but
 observe farther concerning this work, that this learned and judicious
 person has not only fully vindicated the doctrine of the holy Spi-
 rit and his operations from the cavils of adversaries, and the con-
 tempt of profane men, but he has suited his discourse (as he tells
 us) to the edification of them that believe, and directed it to their
 furtherance in spiritual obedience and true holiness; nor will it be
 improper or unseasonable to take notice of the same design, and the
 same sort of objections and cavils against the mysteries of the Gospel,
 and the deep things of God now advanced in our days; for (as
 the Doctor there observes) “ one great exception against the work
 “ of the Spirit in illumination, sanctification, and spiritual gifts,
 “ was, that those who plead for those operations of the Spirit are
 “ therein enemies to reason, and impugn the use of it in Religion.
 “ Hence some of those who are otherwise minded affirm, that it is
 “ cast on them as a reproach, that they are rational Divines;
 “ altho’, as far as I can discern, (says he) if it be so, it is as *Hierom*
 “ was beaten by an Angel for being a *Ciceronian* (in the judgment
 “ of some) very undeservedly”. Who knows not that the *Anti-*
Trinitarians, *Arians*, *Socinians*, and others of the Tribe, make the
 same objection against the Doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in
 the Unity of the Godhead, and the person of Christ God and Man?
 which objection and pretence the Doctor has so well answered in
 his preface, that it is worthy of a distinct perusal by all.

Thus we see with what faithfulness and diligence this great man em-
 ployed his excellent talents for the service of the Church; he was fre-
 quently writing some book or other that might attribute to that noble
 design: And tho’ it might seem too tedious in the history of his life
 to take notice of every one of them, yet we judge it very necessary
 to illustrate his character in giving a particular account of those
 which have deservedly gained a great interest in the esteem of learn-
 ed and good men. Among which we must reckon that incompar-
 able Treatise he published in 1677, intituled, *The Doctrine of Justi-*
fication by Faith thro’ the imputation of the Righteousness of Christ ex-
plained, confirmed and vindicated; wherein he has pursued a method
 and design that required a more than ordinary judgment and skill.

He tells us in the preface, "That tho' he has necessarily taken some
" pains in the explication of that doctrine, which has been in-
" volved in so many and very intricate disputes among men of dif-
" ferent opinions, yet he has insisted chiefly on the interpreta-
" tion of Scripture testimonies, with the application of them to
" the experience of them that believe, and the state of them who
" seek after salvation by Jesus Christ. To declare and vindicate the
" truth to the instruction and edification of such as love it in sin-
" cerity; to extricate their minds from those difficulties in that par-
" ticular instance, which some endeavour to cast on all the myste-
" ries of the Gospel; to direct the consciences of them that inquire
" after abiding peace with God, and to establish the minds of them
" that do believe, are the things herein aimed at." In this perfor-
mance he has avoided the unprofitable jangling of perverse disputati-
on, wherewith this doctrine of Justification has been generally per-
plexed, and all reflections on persons that differ from him. "He
" professes to have written nothing but what he believes to be true,
" and also that he has designed herein the practical direction of the
" consciences of men in their application to God by Jesus Christ, for
" deliverance from the curse due to the Apostate state, and peace
" with him, with the influence that this way of justification has
" upon universal Gospel obedience." Whereby he has effectually
removed the old scandalous objection against this doctrine, as if it
were no friend to holiness, and did give encouragement to loose
practices, which is as old as the delivery of it by the Apostle *Paul*
himself, and is by him fully refuted. It was not possible the real
worth of so excellent a person should be concealed; and in many
instances his reputation shone out with such lustre as drew the ad-
miration and respects of several persons of honour and quality
upon him, who very much delighted in his conversation; particu-
larly the Earl of *Orrery*, the Earl of *Anglesea*, the Lord *Willough-*
by of Parham, the Lord *Wharton*, the Lord *Berkley*, Sir *John*
Trevor, one of the Principal Secretaries of State; and which is
much more, even King *Charles* himself and the Duke of *York* paid
a particular respect to him. When the Doctor was drinking the
Waters at *Tunbridge*, the Duke of *York* being there, sent for him in-
to his Tent, and several discourses pass'd between them about the
Dissenters and Conventicles; and after he return'd to *London*, the
King himself sent for him, and discoursed with him about two
hours together, assuring him of his favour and respect, and telling
him, he might have access to him, as he would. At the same
time the King was pleased to assure the Doctor how much he was
for Liberty of Conscience, and how sensible of the wrong that
had been done to the Dissenters; and as a testimony hereof
gave him a thousand Guineas to distribute among those who had
suffered most by the late severities. The Doctor could do no less
than thankfully accept his Majesty's generosity, and did faithfully
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apply it to that purpose. When this was known, a clamour arose among the Churchmen, who reported he was in pension, to serve the papal interest; but the Doctor to wipe off this vile aspersion, declares solemnly, in his preface to the first part of his *Enquiry into the original of Evangelical Churches*, "That never any one person in authority, dignity, or power in this nation, nor any one that had any relation to public affairs, nor any of the Papists or Protestants did ever speak one word to him, or advise with him about any indulgence or toleration to be granted unto Papists, and challenges all the world to prove the contrary if they can." The Doctor had some friends also among the Bishops, particularly Dr. *Wilkins* Bishop of *Chester* who was very cordial in his respects to him, and Dr. *Barlow*, formerly his Tutor, then Bishop of *Lincoln*, who yet upon a special occasion failed him, when he might have expected the service of his professed friendship. The case was this, Mr. *John Bunyan* had been confined to a goal twelve years upon an excommunication for Non-conformity; now there was a law, that if any two persons will go to the Bishop of the Diocese and offer a cautionary bond, that the prisoner shall conform in half a year, the Bishop may release him upon that bond; whereupon a friend of this poor man desired Dr. OWEN to give him his letter to the Bishop in his behalf, which he readily granted. It was soon after the discovery of the Popish Plot, when this letter was carry'd to the Bishop, who having read it, told the person that delivered it, *That he had a particular kindness for Dr. OWEN, and would deny him nothing he could legally do: Nay, says he, with my service tell him, I shall strain a point to serve him.* (That was his very expression.) *But (says he) this being a new thing to me, I desire a little time to consider of it, and if I can do it, you may be assured of my readiness.* He was waited upon again about a fortnight after, and his answer was, *That indeed he was informed he might do it, but the law providing that in case the Bishop refused, application should be made to the Lord Chancellor, who thereupon should issue forth an order to the Bishop to take the cautionary bond, and release the prisoner.* Now (said he) *you know what a critical time this is, and I have many enemies; I would desire you to move the Lord Chancellor, in the case, and upon his order I will do it.* To which it was replied, this method would be chargeable and the man was poor, not able to expend so much money; and being satisfy'd he could do it legally, it was hoped his Lordship would remember his promise, there being no straining a point in the case. But he would do it upon no other terms; which at last was done, and the poor man released; but little thanks to the Bishop: notwithstanding the Doctor and he kept up a familiarity, and on a time they being together, the Bishop said to the Doctor, *What can you object against our liturgical worship, that I cannot answer?* Upon which the Doctor urged this argument upon him, viz. A means

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appointed by man for the attaining an end of Christ exclusive of the means appointed by Christ for the attaining the same end, is unlawful; But the worship of the Liturgy with all its ceremonies is a means appointed for an end of Christ, namely the edification of the Church, exclusive of the means appointed by Christ for the same end; *Ergo*, it is unlawful. The proof of the argument lies in *Ephes.* iv. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. *He gave gifts unto men----- For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* The Bishop answered, *Their Ministers might preach and pray*; The Doctor answer'd, The administration of the Sacraments is one principal means of the edification of the Church, but the use of the Liturgy is exclusive of the exercise of all gifts in the administration of the Lord's supper. Upon which the Bishop made a pause; said the Doctor, Don't answer suddenly, but take time till our next meeting, which never happened.

It is not to be wondred that a life filled up with so many labours should decline under the weight of infirmities which now began to grow upon him. Some few years before he died he was often ill, and sometimes confined to his bed or chamber, whereby he was taken off in a great measure from his ministerial function, but not altogether disabled from serving the Church of God; and whenever he was able to sit up, he would be continually writing, when not prevented by company, and several excellent books were composed by him; which might deserve a particular notice in this History; but we choose not to swell it with such accounts, and therefore refer the reader to the complete catalogue of all his Works at the end of this volume. There is one book which claims a distinct regard in this place, viz. *Apostolical Or, A Declaration of the glorious mystery of the person of Christ God and Man*, published 1679. The design of this treatise is declared in a large preface full of learning, wherein he shows what opposition has been in all ages made to the person of Christ, by *Nestorians, Arians, Socinians*, and others; that this doctrine is the rock on which the Church is built, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it; and thro' the whole book he pleads the cause of the glory of Christ, his Derry as coessential and coeternal with the Father, and irrefragably proves, that divine honour and religious worship is due to him, against all the subtil evasions of that scheme which is in our days afresh advanced to the contempt of his glorious Person: In one word, there is such a strain of piety, and zeal, and learning running thro' the whole, as renders it worthy of the most serious perusal, and will endear his memory to all that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity. Before we close our account of his works, we can't forbear taking notice of another excellent treatise published by him 1681, intitled, *Of the grace and duty of being spiritually minded*. It was composed out of his own deep and spiritual meditations originally designed

signed for his own use, not long before his death; and in it he breaths out the sentiments and devotion of a mind full of heaven, and the glories of that better world. "He wrote it (as he tells us) "in a season wherein he was every way unable to do any thing for "the edification of others, and far from expectation that he ever "should be able any more in this world." And after he had communicated them to a private Congregation, being convinced how necessary and seasonable these discourses were to the present state of professors, their temper and carriage, he was induced to send them forth to the benefit of the Church. He bewails the carnal frames and lives of professors, and was very sensible that if the prevalence of the world over the minds and affections of Christians be not prevented or cured, it would eat out the very heart and life of true religion. This discourse was designed as an antidote against this growing evil, and calculated to promote a spiritual and heavenly frame in the minds of professors; and we cannot but recommend it to the diligent perusal of all Christians at this day, wherein this dangerous disease of worldly mindedness so evidently abounds. We might also mention with great esteem his meditations on the glory of Christ in two parts, which give us an ample testimony of that pious and heavenly frame, that clear and intimate knowledge of the glory of Christ, and that fervent love to Christ's person, which filled his soul; there he thinks and writes like one that was in a full and near view of that unvailed glory. Now the time drew near when he must dye, and after all his labours and sufferings enter into the joy of his Lord: His infirmities of body grew on him apace, which obliged him to retire into the country for the benefit of the air. He went to *Kensington* and lived there sometime: One day as he was coming from thence to *London* in the *Strand* two informers seized upon his coach and horses, upon which a mob gathered about him: The providence of God so ordered it, that Sir *Edmund Bury Godfrey* came by at that time, and seeing a mob, ask'd what the matter was? and being a Justice of the Peace, he ordered the informers and Doctor OWEN to meet him at a Justice of the Peace his house near *Bloomsbury Square* upon a day appointed, and he would get some other of his brethren to be there to hear the cause: They met accordingly, and Sir *Edmund* being in the chair, upon examining the whole matter they found the informers had acted so very illegally, that they discharged the Doctor, and severely reprimanded them; after which he was no more disturbed by them. From *Kensington* he went to *Ealing* where he had a house of his own; where he finished his course. During which time he employed his thoughts in the contemplation of the other world, as one that was drawing near to it every day; which produced his meditations on the glory of Christ beforemention'd; in which he breathed out the devotion of a soul that was growing continually into the temper of the heavenly state. The day before

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he died, he dictated to his Wife a letter to a particular friend whom he much honoured, ' wherein he thus expresses himself. " I am
 " leaving the Church in a storm, but while the great Pilot is in
 " it, the loss of a poor under-rower will be inconsiderable; live
 " and pray, and hope and wait patiently, and do not despond;
 " the promise stands invincible, that he will never leave us, nor
 " forsake us." Hence we may observe that *Anthony à Wood*, a bitter enemy to such as the Doctor, had no reason to say, that he did very unwillingly lay down his head and die; as if he had been witness to his last hours. But 'tis well known his foul pen can fix no slander on so bright a character as the Doctor's.

HE died in the 67th year of his age, *Aug. 24, 1683*, a day remarkable for the extinction of so many famous lights for their Nonconformity. He was carried from *Ealing* to the burying ground in *Bunhill Fields*, his Herse being attended by a very great number of Noblemen's and Gentlemen's coaches with six horses each, and many Gentlemen on horseback. He was inter'd in a new vault towards the east end of that burying place, with a monument of free stone erected over it, having an Epitaph ingraven on it; which with two others is added at the end of this history, free from the Artificers mistakes, after the original Copy. He left behind him a mournful Widow who had lived with him about seven years; a Gentlewoman of a considerable family, being the daughter of ----- *Michel Esq;* of *Kingston-Russel, Dorsetshire*; she was a person of very good sense and judgment, truly religious, very tender and affectionate to the Doctor; she survived him many years, and was inter'd in the same vault which she had erected for him.

THUS we have drawn down the history of this great man to the last period, and every one that reads will see it is a very imperfect account of one, whose character and life was so full of the best qualifications and most useful services, that if we had been furnished with sufficient materials, he would have appeared the brightest instance of learning and piety, which many ages have produc'd; we can't but lament this unavoidable defect, at so great a distance, and shall content our selves to sum up his character in miniature, the result of the foregoing history.

As to his person his stature was tall, his visage grave and majestic, and withal comely: he had the aspect and deportment of a Gentleman, suitable to his birth. He had a very large capacity of mind, a ready invention, and good judgment, a great natural wit which being improv'd by education, rendered him a person of incomparable abilities: As to his temper he was very affable and courteous, familiar and sociable; the meanest persons found an easy access to his converse and friendship. He was facetious and pleasant in his common discourse, jesting with his acquaintance, but with sobriety and measure; a great master of his passions especially that of anger: he was of a serene and even temper, neither elated with honour, credit, friends, or estate, nor deprest with troubles

and difficulties. His carriage was genteel, in nothing mean: He was generous in his favours. His great worth drew on him the respects of very considerable persons, some of the best quality at home, and of strangers from foreign parts who resorted to him, to whom he always carried himself in so obliging a manner, that he was greatly valued beyond sea; for foreign Divines having read his Latin discourses, learn'd English that they might have the benefit of his other works; and many travelled into *England* to see him and converse with him; many also were the letters between him and learned persons abroad, and particularly that famous Gentlewoman *Anna Maria a Schurman*. It is a loss to the public much to be regreted, that none of these letters can be now found, which is one great reason that we can furnish out so small a number of the Doctor's letters in this volume. He was a person of great moderation in his judgment, of a charitable spirit, willing to think the best of all men as far as he could; not censorious; a lover of piety in men of different professions, not confining Christianity within the narrow compass of any one party in the world; a studier of peace, and a promoter of it among professing Christians. As for his learning he was one of the brightest ornaments of the University, a perfect Master of the *Latin, Greek and Hebrew* tongues. He was a great Philosopher; and also well read in the Civil Law. A great Historian; having a perfect comprehension of Church history in particular. He was thoroughly versed in all the *Greek and Latin* Poets; well skill'd in the Rabbi's, and made great use of them as there was occasion. He was an excellent Divine, as appears by his writings; unwearied he was in his studies, and his proficiency was answerable; his labours both in writing and preaching, and other services peculiar to his function as a Minister of the Gospel, and Pastor of a Church, were incredible. He was well skill'd in Polemical Divinity: as appears in his learned works against the *Papists, Socinians, Arminians*, &c. of which we have given a true account in this history. He had studied well the discipline and government of the Church of Christ according to divine appointment, and tho' when he was a young man he was of the Presbyterian judgment, yet his riper years and closer search determined his sentiments fully for the Congregational Order, and he has written excellently upon that subject in two Volumes in *Quarto*. His piety and devotion was very eminent, his experimental knowledge of spiritual things very great, as his discourses of mortification, temptation, indwelling-sin, communion with God, his exposition on the 130th *Psalms*, &c. do sufficiently evidence. In all relations he behaved himself as a great Christian, a faithful and loving husband, a tender father, a good master, and a prudent governor when he was in places of honour and service; and a very dutiful peaceable subject. He was well acquainted with men and things, and would give a shrewd guess at a man's temper and designs upon the first acquaintance. He was an excellent preacher, having very good elocution, graceful and affectionate. He could on all occasions

casions, on a sudden without any premeditation express himself well and pertinently on any subject; yet were his sermons mostly well studied and digested; nor did he generally use notes in the pulpit. He was indeed richly furnished with all the stores of learning, which admirably fitted him for the defence of the truth against the most subtil adversaries; and it plainly appears by his writings that he was raised up by divine Providence to be an instrument of diffusing a very clear knowledge of Gospel truths, and of preserving them from the designs of corrupt and perverse men: and with all this prodigious treasure of human learning there was another almost singular qualification in him; that he was able and ready to apply himself to all practical cases of conscience, and had a rare faculty of speaking a word in season to those under temptation, desertion and affliction. A most happy conjunction indeed of great learning and of spiritual experience, which he had the wisdom and faithfulness to apply to the best purposes; and when he handled any polemical subject in Divinity he was always careful where the case would admit to consult the benefit and comfort of believers, and the advancement of the power of godliness: nor can we pass over his admirable christian temper in managing controversy; for tho' persons are generally apt to be warm in throwing out reflections and sarcasms against their adversaries, (and this great man met with many provocations of this kind from his opponents) yet so grave and meek a disposition did he preserve throughout his writings, that there has scarce any thing dropt from his pen but what becomes the character of a solid divine, and an excellent Christian. We shall give one instance that may serve for all; which appears in his answer to Mr. J. Goodwin, a zealous *Arminian*, who had opposed that great Doctrine of the saints perseverance, which the Church of God has always been tender of, as one chief argument of comfort. In his preface to the heads and governors of the Colleges and Halls in *Oxford*, after he had given his adversary a great character for his parts, learning, and eloquence, he takes notice of his subtil evasions and sharp invectives. "For a man (saies the Doctor) to warm himself by casting about his pen, until it be so filled with indignation and scorn as to blur every page, and almost every line, is a course that will never promote the praise, nor adorn the truth of God; for what remains concerning him, *Do illi ingenium, Do eloquentiam & industriam; fidem & veritatem utinam coluisset.*" Such was the character of his opponent. Now see how the Doctor treats him in his answer, take the account in his own words which immediately follow, viz. "The course and condition of my procedure with him, whether it be such as becomes christian modesty and sobriety, with an allowance of those ingredients of zeal in contending for the truth, which in such cases the holy Ghost gives a command for, is referr'd to the judgment of all who are concerned, and account themselves so in the things of God. As to bitterness of expression, personal reflections by application of

“ satyrical invectives, I know nothing by my self, yet I dare not
 “ account that I am hereby justified.” This is the right christian
 temper he has kept thro’ all his writings: a very great attainment!
 and a vast advantage it was to the good design he was carrying on
 for the glory of God, and for the interest of truth, holiness and
 peace.

*Some farther account of his character and works may be read in the
 following Epitaphs, all composed by the ingenious and reverend Mr.
 Tho. Gilbert of Oxford.*

* JOHANNES OWEN, S. T. P.

Agro Oxoniensi Oriundus;

Patre insigni Theologo Theologus Ipse Insignior;

Et Seculi hujus Insignissimis annumerandus:

Communibus Humaniorum Literarum Suppetiis,

Mensura parum Communi, Instructus;

Omnibus, quasi bene Ordinata Ancillarum Serie,

Ab illo jussis Sux Famulari Theologiæ:

Theologiæ Polemicæ, Practicæ, &, quam vocant, Casuum

(Harum enim Omnium quæ magis Sua habenda erat, ambigitur)

In illa, Viribus plusquam Herculeis, Serpentibus tribus,

Arminio, Socino, Cano, Venenosa Strinxit Guttura:

In ista, Suo prior, ad Verbi Amussim, Expertus Pectore,

Universam Sp. S^ci. Œconomiam Aliis tradidit:

Et, missis Cæteris, Coluit Ipse, Sensitque,

Beatam, quam Scripsit, cum Deo Communionem:

In Terris Viator comprehensori in Cælis proximus:

In Casuum Theologia, Singulis Oraculi instar habitus;

Quibus Opus erat, & Copia, Consulendi:

Scriba ad Regnum Cælorum usquequoque Institutus;

Multis privatos infra Parietes, à Suggesto Pluribus,

A Prelo Omnibus, ad eundem Scopum collineantibus,

Pura Doctrinæ Evangelicæ Lampas Præluxit;

Et sensim, non sine aliorum, suoque sensu,

Sic prælucendo Periit,

Affiduis Infirmitatibus Obsiti,

Morbis Creberrimis Impetiti,

Durisque Laboribus potissimum Attriti, Corporis

(Fabricæ, donec ita Quassatæ, Spectabilis) Ruinas,

Deo ultra Serviendo inhabiles, Sancta Anima,

Deo ultra Fruendi Cupida, Deservit;

Die, à Terrenis Potestatibus, Plurimis facto Fatali;

Illi, à Cœlesti Numine, Felici reddito;

Mensis Scilicet Augusti XXIV^o. Anno à Partu Virgineo.

MDCLXXXIII^o, Ætat. LXVII^o.

* This Inscription is engraven on his Tomb-stone.

JOHANNES

JOHANNES OWEN, S. T. P.

Agro Oxoniensi, Patre Insigni Theologo,
Matre Pia Matrona, Oriundus:
Morum Elegantia, & Lepore innocuo,
Omnibus, quibuscum Conversatus est, Gratissimus:
Donorum pari Gratiarumque, Eminentia,
Iis potissimum in Pretio habitus, & Deliciis,
Quibus Sincera Cura erat, Cordique, Religio:
Literis Natus, Literis Innutritus, Totusque Deditus;
Donec Animata planè evasit Bibliotheca:
Authoribus Classicis, qua Græcis, qua Latinis,
Sub Edv. Sylvestro, Scholæ privatæ Oxonii Moderatore,
Operam navavit Satis Felicem:
Feliciorem adhuc Studiis Philosophicis,
Magno Sub Barlovio, Coll. Reginalis, id tempus, Socio
(Ædis Christi ibidem, temporis Decursu, Ipsemet Decanus;
Et quinquennali Academiæ Vice-Cancellarius.)
Theologiæ demum longè Felicissimus incubuit;
Artibus Pedisequis, Duce & Auspice, Sæpius Christi Spiritu:
(Cujus Omnes, in parta à Christo Redemptione
Applicanda, Partes Theologorum Solus Exposuit.)
Triumque, quæ Doctæ præsertim audiunt, Linguarum
(Præter alias Orientales Hebraicæ Cognatas) Peritus,
Paginas Sacras Intus & in Cute,
Spiritu & Litera, Sibi habuit Notissimas:
In Magnis verò Nascentis Ecclesiæ Luminibus Versatissimus;
Primis longum Degeneris Restitutoribus nequaquam neglectis;
Nec melioris Notæ Scholasticis Contemptui habitis;
Tam in Palæstra, quam Pulpito, Dominatus est:
In Palæstra, Pontificios, Remonstrantes, Socinistas, Nostrosque
In Momentoso Justificationis Apice Novaturientes,
Scriptis Nervosissimis prostravit, proculcavit:
In Pulpito, maximè Infirmi Corporis
Præsentia minimè infirma:
Gestu, Theatrica procul Gesticulatione,
Ad optimas Decori Regulas composito:
Sermone, à Contemptibili remotissimo; Canoro,
Sed non Stridulo; Suavi, sed prorsus Virili;
Et Authoritatis quiddam Sonante:
Pari, si non & Superiore, Animi Præsentia;
Concionum, quas, ad Verbum, totas Chartis commisit,
Ne verbum quidem, vel carptim & stringente Oculo,
Inter Prædicandum Lætitavit:
Sed Omnia, Suo primum Impressa altius Pectori,
Auditorum Animis, Cordibusque potentius Ingressit:
Nec Orandi minùs, quàm Perorandi, Donis Instructus,
Ministri verè Evangelici Omnes complevit Numeros:
Cultus, & Regiminis, Instituti (unà cum Doctrina Revelata)
Magnus Ipsemet Zelotes, & Assessor Strenuus:
Amplissimæ denique, cui Spiritus Sanctus eum præfecerat, Ecclesiæ
Prudentissimus pariter ac Vigilantissimus Pastor:
Cujus Prælustri è Multis Unum Sufficiat Epitaphio:
AUTHOR QUADRIPARTITI IN EP. AD HEBR. COMMENTARII:
Peracto in Terris Cursu, & quod acceperat, Ministerio;
Ad Christi in Cælo Statum, quem, Sero Vitæ Vespere,
Clariùs, licet Eminus, Prospectum, Graphicè Linearat:
Propius, Penitiusque, Contuendum, Anhelus Decessit:
Mensis Augusti (Non-Conformistis id magis adhuc Fatali)
Die XXIV^o, Anno Salut. MDCLXXXIII^o, Ætat. LXVII^o.

JOHANNES

JOHANNES OWEN, S. T. P.
 Agro Oxoniensi Oriundus;
 Patre insigni Theologo Theologus Ipse Insignior;
 Et Seculi hujus Insignissimis Annumerandus:
 Unis, atque etiam alteris Felix Nuptiis:
 Prima Ætatis Virilis Consors Maria
 Rei Domesticæ perite Studioſa,
 Rebus Dei Domus Se totum addicendi,
 Copiam illi fecit Gratissimam:
 Dorothea Vice, non Ortu, Opibus, Officiisve, Secunda,
 Laboribus, Morbis, Senioque ipso, Elanguenti
 Indulgentissimam etiam Se Nutricem præstitit:
 Quatuor, iisque Indolis Optimæ, Liberis Orbatus;
 Alteri, fecundioris nempe Cerebri, Proſapia
 (Numero, Pondere, Usuque, æſtimandæ)
 Ad ſeros uſque Poſteros, ipſiusque etiam (jam Senefcentis)
 Mundi Funera, Nomen Deducendum tradidit:
 Naturæ Supremum lubenter Solvens Debitum,
 Menſe, Dieque iisdem (I^a Supra XX^m deinceps Anni)
 Quibus Civilem Publici Miniſtri Mortem
 (Fratres inter quam plurimos) ante Paſſus fuerat.

Menſis Scilicet Auguſti Die XXIV^o, Anno Salutis
 MDCLXXXIII^o, Ætatis LXVII^o.



A Complete Catalogue of the DOCTOR'S Works.

FOLIO.

1. **O**F the Saints Perseverance. - - - Oxon, 1654
 2. An Exposition on the Epistle to the Hebrews, in 4 Vol. Lond. 1668 &c
 3. A Discourse of the Holy Spirit. - - - 1674
 4. A Complete Collection of his Sermons formerly published with others never before printed: Also several Tracts now first published from MSS. with others grown very scarce, viz.
 - * Several practical Cases of Conscience resolv'd.
 - * Of Marrying after Divorce in case of Adultery.
 - * Of Infant-Baptism.
 - * A Word of Advice to the Citizens of London.
 - * The State of the Kingdom.
 An Account of the Grounds and Reasons why Protestant Dissenters desire their Liberty.
 The Case of present Distresses on Nonconformity examin'd. London, 1721
 A Letter concerning the Matter of the present Excommunications.
 An Answer to this Question: May a true Church err or mistake in administering Church-Censures.
 Some short Reflections on a slanderous Libel against the DOCTOR.
 * Five Latin Orations when Vice-Chancellor of Oxford.
- To this Volume are prefix'd some Memoirs of the DOCTOR'S Life, with several of his Letters; and his Funeral Sermon preach'd by Mr. *Clarkson*.

QUARTO.

1. A Display of Arminianism. - - - 1643
2. The Duty of Pastors and People distinguish'd. - - - 1644
3. *Salus Electorum, Sanguis Jesu*: Or, The Death of Death, in the Death of Christ. - - - 1648
4. Of the Death of Christ. - - -
5. *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*: Or, The Mystery of the Gospel vindicated, &c. in answer to J. Biddle. - - - 1655
6. Of

N. B. Those Tracts in this Vol. mark'd thus, (*) were never before publish'd.

6. Of Communion with God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 1657
7. Θεολογούμενα: *Sive de naturâ, ortu, progressu, & Studio Veræ Theologiae.* - - - 1661
8. An Exposition of the cxxxth Psalm. - - - 1668
9. The Doctrine of Justification by Faith through the imputed Righteousness of Christ, explain'd, &c. - - - 1677
10. The Glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ, God and Man. - - - 1679
11. The Grace and duty of being spiritually minded. - - - 1681
12. An Enquiry into the Original, Nature, Institution, Power, Order, and Communion of Evangelical Churches. - - - 1681
13. The true Nature of a Gospel-Church, and its Government. 1689
14. A Review of the Annotations of *Grotius*. - - - 1656
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18. The Church of *Rome* no safe Guide. - - - 1679
19. Some Considerations about Union among Protestants - - - 1680
20. Vindication of the Nonconformists from the Charge of Schism. - - - 1680
21. An Account of the Nature of the Protestant Religion. 1682

OCTAVO.

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2. *Eschcol*: Or rules for Church-Fellowship. - - - 1648
3. *Diatriba de justitia divina.* - - - 1653
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Some

Some Letters, written by the Doctor to particular Friends.



To Monsieur Du MOULIN.

N^o 1.

SIR,

I Have receiv'd your strictures upon our confession, wherein you charge it with palpable contradiction, nonsense, enthusiasm, and false doctrine; that is, all the evils that can be crouded into such a writing: And I understand by another Letter since, that you have sent the same paper to others, which is the sole cause of the return which I now make to you: And I beg your pardon in telling you, that all your instances are your own mistakes, or the mistakes of your friend, as I shall briefly manifest to you.

First, You say there is a plain contradiction between Chap. 3. Art. 6. and Chap. 30. Art. 2. In the first place it is said, None but the Elect are redeem'd; but in the other it is said, The Sacrament is a memorial of the one offering of Christ upon the cross for all. I do admire to find this charged by you as a contradiction; for you know full well, that all our divines who maintain that the elect only were redeem'd effectually by Christ, do yet grant that Christ died for all in the Scripture sense of the word; that is, some of all sorts, and never dreamt of any contradiction in their assertion. But your mistake is worse, for in Chap. 30. Art. 2. which you refer to, there is not one word mention'd of Christ's dying for all; but that the sacrifice which he offer'd, was offer'd once for all, which is the expression of the Apostle, to intimate that it was but once offer'd in opposition to the frequent repetitions of the sacrifices of the Jews. And pray, if you go on in your translation, don't fall into a mistake upon it; for in the very close of the article it is said, That Christ's only sacrifice was a propitiation for the sins of all the elect. The words you urge out of 2 Pet. ii. 1. are not in the text: They are by your quotation, denied him that had redeem'd them; but it is, denied the sovereign Lord which had bought them; which words have quite another sense.

Something you quote out of Chap. 6. Art. 6. where I think you suppose we do not distinguish between the reatus and macula of sin: and so think that we grant the defilement of Adam's person, and consequently of all intermediate propagations to be imputed unto us. Pray Sir, give me leave to say, that I cannot but think your mind was employ'd about other things, when you dreamt of our being guilty of such a folly and madness: neither is there any one word in the Confession which gives countenance unto it.

If you would throw away so much time as to read any part of my late discourse about Justification, it is not unlikely but that you would see something of the nature of the guilt of sin, and the imputation of it, which may give you satisfaction.

In your next instance which you refer unto, Chap. 19. Art. 3. by some mistake (there being nothing to the purpose in that place) you say, It is presuppos'd that some who have attained age may be elected, and yet have not the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is a pure enthusiasm, and is contrary to Chap. 20. Art. 2. *Why Sir!* That many who are eternally elected, and yet for some season, some less, some longer, do live without the knowledge of Christ, until they are converted by the word and Spirit, is not an enthusiasm; but your exception is contrary to the whole Scripture, contrary to the experience of all days and ages, overthrows the work of the ministry, and is so absurd to sense and reason, and daily experience, that I know not what to say to it; only, I confess, that if with some of the Arminians you don't believe that any are elected from eternity, or before they do actually believe, something may be spoken to countenance your exception: but that we cannot regard, for it was our design to oppose all their errors.

Your next instance is a plain charge of false doctrine, taken out of Chap. 11. Art. 1. speaking, as you say, of the active obedience of Christ imputed to us, which is contrary to Art. 3. where it is said, That Christ acquits by his obedience in death, and not by his fulfilling of the law. *Sir,* You still give me cause of some new admiration in all these objections, and I fear you make use of some corrupt copy of our Confession: For we say not, as you allege, that Christ by his obedience in death did acquit us, and not by his fulfilling of the law: But we say, That Christ by his obedience and death did fully discharge the debt of all those who are justified, which comprehends both his active and passive righteousness. But you add a reason, whereby you design to disprove this doctrine of ours, concerning the imputation of the active righteousness of Christ unto our justification. *Why,* you say, it is contrary to reason, for that we are freed from satisfying God's justice, by being punished by death, but not from the fulfilling of the law; therefore the fulfilling of the law by Christ, is no satisfaction for us: we are not freed from active obedience, but from passive obedience. Pray, *Sir,* don't mistake that such mistaken reasonings can give us any occasion to change our judgments in an article of truth of this importance. When you shall have been pleas'd to read my book of Justification, and have answer'd solidly what I have written upon this subject, I will tell you more of my mind: In the mean time I tell you, we are by the death of Christ freed from all sufferings, as they are purely penal, and the effects of the curse, though they spring out of that root: Only, *Sir,* you and I know full well that we are not freed from pains, afflictions, and death itself, which had never been, had they not proceeded from the curse of the law. And so, *Sir,* by the obedience of Christ we are freed from obedience to the law, as to justification by the works thereof; we are no more obliged to obey the law in order to justification, than we

are oblig'd to undergo the penalties of the law to answer its curse. But these things have been fully debated elsewhere.

In the last place, your friend wishes it could be avoided and declined to speak any thing about universal grace, for that it would raise some or most Divines against it. I judge myself beholden to your friend for the advice, which I presume he judges to be good and wholesome: But I beg your pardon that I cannot comply with it, altho' I shall not reflect with any severity upon them who are of another judgment: And to tell you the truth, the immethodical new method introduced to give countenance to universal grace, is, in my judgment, suited to draw us off from all due conceptions concerning the grace of God in Jesus Christ, which I shall not now stay to demonstrate, tho' I will not decline the undertaking of it, if God gives me strength at any time. And I do wonder to hear you say, that many, if not most Divines will rise against it, who have published in print, that there was but two in England that was of that opinion; and have strenuously opposed it your self. How things are in France I know not, but at Geneva, in Holland, in Switzerland, in all the protestant Churches of Germany, I do know that this universal grace is exploded. Sir, I shall trouble you no farther, I pray be pleased to accept of my desire to undeceive you in those things, wherein either a corrupt copy of our Confession, or the reasonings of other men, have given you so many mistaken conceptions about our confession.

I am, Sir, yours,

J. OWEN.

To the Lady HARTOPP.

N^o 2.

DEAR MADAM,

EVery work of God is good; the holy One in the midst of us will do no iniquity; and all things shall work together for good unto them that love him; even those things which at present are not joyous, but grievous; only his time is to be waited for, and his way submitted unto, that we seem not to be displeased in our hearts, that he is Lord over us. Your dear infant is in the eternal enjoyment of the fruits of all our prayers, for the covenant of God is ordered in all things, and sure: we shall go to her; she shall not return to us. Happy she was in this above us, that she had so speedy an issue of sin and misery, being born only to exercise your faith and patience, and to glorify God's grace in her eternal blessedness. My trouble would be great on the account of my absence at this time from you both, but that this also is the Lord's doing; and I know my own uselessness wherever I am. But this I will beg of God for you both, that you may not faint in this day of trial, that you may have a clear

clear view of those spiritual and temporal mercies wherewith you are yet intrusted, all undeserved, that sorrow of the world may not so overtake your hearts, as to disenable to any duties, to grieve the Spirit, to prejudice your lives; for it tends to death. God in Christ will be better to you than ten children, and will so preserve your remnant, and so add to them, as shall be for his glory, and your comfort: only consider, that sorrow in this case is no duty, it is an effect of sin, whose cure by grace we should endeavour. Shall I say, be chearful? I know I may. God help you to honour grace and mercy in a compliance therewith. My heart is with you, my prayers shall be for you, and am,

Dear Madam,

Your most affectionate friend,

and unworthy pastor,

J. OWEN.

TO MRS. POLHILL

N^o 3.

DEAR MADAM,

THE trouble express'd in yours is a great addition to mine: the sovereignty of divine wisdom and grace is all that I have at this day to retreat unto; God direct you thereunto also, and you will find rest and peace. It adds to my trouble that I cannot possibly come down to you this week; nothing but engaged duty could keep me from you one hour: yet I am conscious how little I can contribute to your guidance in this storm, or your satisfaction. Christ is your pilot, and however the vessel is toss'd whilst he seems to sleep, he will arise and rebuke these winds and waves in his own time. I have done it, and yet shall farther wrestle with God for you, according to the strength he is pleas'd to communicate. Little it is which at this distance I can mind you of, yet some few things are necessary. Sorrow not too much for the dead; she is entred into rest, and is taken away from the evil to come. Take heed lest by too much grief, you too much grieve that holy Spirit, who is infinitely more to us than all natural relations. I blame you not that you so far attend to the call of God in this dispensation, as to search your self, to judge and condemn your self: grace can make it an evidence to you, that you shall not be judged or condemned of the Lord. I dare not say that this chastisement was not needful. We are not in heaviness unless need be; but if God be pleas'd to give you a discovery of the wisdom and care that is in it, and how needful it was to awaken and restore your soul in any thing, perhaps in many things, in due time you will see grace and love in it also. I verily believe God expects in this dealing with you, that you should judge
your

your self, your sins, and your decays; but he would not have you misjudge your condition. But we are like froward children, who when they are rebuked and corrected, neglect other things, and only cry that their parents hate and reject them. You are apt to fear, to think and say, that you are one whom God regards not, who are none of his, and that for sundry reasons which you suppose you can plead: But, saith God, this is not the business, this is a part of your frowardness; I call you to quicken your grace, to amend your own ways, and you think you have nothing to do, but to question my love. Pray, Madam, my dear sister, child and care, beware you lose not the advantage of this dispensation; you will do so, if you use it only to afflictive sorrows, or questioning of the love of God, or your interest in Christ. The time will be spent in these things, which should be taken up in earnest endeavours after a compliance with God's will, quickenings of grace, returns after backsliding, mortification of sin and love of the world, until the sense of it do pass away. Labour vigorously to bring your soul to this twofold resolution. (1.) That the will of God is the best rule for all things, and their circumstances. (2.) That you will bring your self into a fresh engagement to live more to him; and you will find the remainder of your work easy; for it is part of the yoke of Christ. I shall trouble you no farther, but only to give you the assurance that you are in my heart continually, which is nothing; but it helps to persuade me that you are in the heart of Christ, which is all. I am,

Dear Madam,

Your very affectionate servant,

J. OWEN.

To his Church, when he was sick at the Lord Wharton's
in the Country.

N^o. 4.

Beloved in the Lord,

Mercy, grace, and peace be multiplied to you from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, by the communication of the Holy Ghost. I thought and hoped that by this time I might have been present with you, according to my desire and resolution; but it has pleased our holy, gracious Father otherwise to dispose of me, at least for a season. The continuance of my painful infirmities, and the encrease of my weaknesses will not allow me at present to hope, that I should be able to bear the journey. How great an exercise this is to me, considering the season, he knows, to whose will I would in all things chearfully submit my self. But altho' I am absent from you in body, I am in mind, affection, and spirit present with you, and in your assemblies; for I hope you will be

found my crown and rejoicing in the day of the Lord: and my prayer for you night and day is, that you may stand fast in the whole will of God, and maintain the beginning of your confidence without wavering, firm unto the end. I know it is needless for me at this distance to write to you, about what concerns you in point of duty at this season, that work being well supplied by my brother in the ministry; you will give me leave, out of my abundant affections towards you, to bring some few things to your remembrance, as my weakness will permit.

In the first place, I pray God, it may be rooted and fixed in our minds, that the shame and loss we may undergo, for the sake of Christ, and the profession of the Gospel, is the greatest honour which in this life we can be made partakers of: So it was esteem'd by the Apostles; they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name's sake: It is a privilege superadded to the grace of faith, which all are not made partakers of. Hence it is reckon'd to the Philippians in a peculiar manner, that it was given to them, not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for him: That it is far more honourable to suffer with Christ, than to reign with the greatest of his enemies: If this be fixed by faith in our minds, it will tend greatly to our encouragement. I mention these things only, as knowing that they are more at large press'd on you.

The next thing I would recommend to you at this season, is, the increase of mutual love among yourselves; for every trial of our faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, is also a trial of our love towards the brethren. This is that which the Lord Christ expects from us, namely, That when the hatred of the world doth openly manifest and act itself against us all, we should evidence an active love among ourselves. If there have been any decays, any coldness herein, if they are not recovered and healed in such a season, it can never be expected. I pray God therefore, that your mutual love may abound more and more in all the effects and fruits of it towards the whole society, and every member thereof. You may justly measure the fruit of your present trial by the increase of this grace among you: In particular have a due regard to the weak and the tempted; that that which is lame may not be turned out of the way, but rather let it be healed.

Furthermore, brethren, I beseech you, hear a word of advice in case the persecution encreases, which it is like to do for a season. I could wish that because you have no ruling elders, and your teachers cannot walk about publickly with safety, that you would appoint some among yourselves, who may continually, as their occasions will admit, go up and down, from house to house, and apply themselves peculiarly to the weak, the tempted, the fearful, those that are ready to despond, or to halt, and to encourage them in the Lord. Chuse out those to this end who are endued with a spirit of courage and fortitude; and let them know that they are happy whom Christ will honour with this blessed work: And I desire the persons may be of this number who are faithful men, and know the state of the Church: By this means you will know what is the frame of the members of the Church, which will be a great direction to you, even in your prayers. Watch now, brethren, that, if it be the will of God, not one soul may be
lost

lost from under your care; let no one be overlook'd or neglected; consider all their conditions, and apply yourselves to all their circumstances.

Finally, brethren, that I be not at present farther troublesome to you, examine yourselves, as to your spiritual benefit which you have receiv'd, or do receive, by your present fears and dangers, which will alone give you the true measure of your condition; for if this tends to the exercise of your faith, and love, and holiness, if this encreases your valuation of the privileges of the Gospel, it will be an undoubted token of the blessed issue which the Lord Christ will give unto your troubles. Pray for me as you do, and do it the rather, that, if it be the will of God, I may be restored to you; and if not, that a blessed entrance may be given to me into the kingdom of God and glory. Salute all the Church in my name. I take the boldness in the Lord to subscribe myself,

Your unworthy Pastor,

and your Servant for Jesus sake,

J. OWEN.

P. S. I humbly desire you would in your prayers remember the family where I am, from whom I have receiv'd, and do receive, great christian kindness. I may say as the Apostle of Onesiphorus, The Lord give to them, that they may find mercy of the Lord in that day, for they have often refreshed me in my great distress.

TO CHARLES FLEETWOOD, Esq;

N^o 5.

DEAR SIR,

I Receiv'd yours, and am glad to hear of your welfare; there is more than ordinary mercy in every day's preservation. My wife, I bless God, is much revived, so that I do not despair of her recovery: But for myself, I have been under the power of various distempers for fourteen days past, and do yet so continue. God is fastning his instruction concerning the approach of that season, wherein I must lay down this tabernacle. I think my mind has been too much intent upon some things, which I looked on as services for the Church, but God will have us know, that he has no need of me nor them, and is therefore calling me off from them. Help me with your prayers, that I may through the riches of his grace in Christ, be in some measure ready for my account. The truth is, we cannot see the latter rain in its season, as we have seen the former, and a latter spring thereon: Death that will turn in the streams of glory upon our poor withering souls, is the best relief. I begin to fear that we

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shall

shall die in this wilderness; yet ought we to labour and pray continually, that the heavens would drop down from above, and the skies pour down righteousness, that the earth may open and bring forth salvation, and that righteousness may spring up together. If ever I return to you in this world, I beseech you to contend yet more earnestly, than ever I have done with God, with my own heart, with the Church, to labour after spiritual revivals. Our affectionate service to your Lady, and to all your family that are of the household of God. I am,

Dearest Sir,

Stadham, July 8.

Yours most affectionately whilst I live,

J. OWEN.

TO CHARLES FLEETWOOD, Esq;

DEAR SIR,

THE bearer has stay'd long enough with us to save you the trouble of reading an account of me in my own scribbling: a longer stay I could not prevail with him for, tho' his company was a great refreshment to me. Both you, and your whole family, in all their occasions and circumstances, are daily in my thoughts; and when I am enabled to pray, I make mention of you all without ceasing. I find you and I are much in complaining: for my part I must say, and is there not a cause? so much deadness, so much unspirituality, so much weakness in faith, coldness in love, instability in holy meditations, as I find in myself, is cause sufficient of complaints; but is there not cause also of thanksgiving, and joy in the Lord? Are there not reasons for them? When I begin to think of them, I am overwhelmed; they are great, they are glorious, they are inexpressible. Shall I now invite you to this great duty of rejoicing more in the Lord? Pray for me that I may do so; for the near approach of my dissolution calls for it earnestly: my heart has done with this world, even in the best, and most desirable of its refreshments: if the joy of the Lord be not now strength unto it, it will fail. But I must have done. Unless God be pleased to affect some person, or persons, with a deep sense of our declining condition, of the temptations and dangers of the day, filling them with compassion for the souls of men, making them fervent in spirit in their work, it will go but ill with us. It may be these thoughts spring from causeless fears; it may be none amongst us has an evil, a barren heart but myself: but bear with me in this my folly; I cannot lay down these thoughts until I die; nor do I mention them at present, as tho' I should not esteem it a great mercy to have so able a supply as Mr. C. but I am groaning after deliverance; and being near the center, do hope I feel the drawing of the love of Christ with more earnestness than formerly:

merly: but my naughty heart is backward in these compliances. My affectionate service to Sir John Hartopp, and his Lady, and to the rest of your family, when God shall return them unto you. I am,

dear Sir,

Yours most affectionately

in everlasting bonds,

J. OWEN.

N^o 7.

To the Reverend Mr. ROBERT ASTY of Norwich.

DEAR SIR,

I Received yours by Mr. B. to whom I shall commit this return, and hope it will come safely to your hands: for altho' I can acknowledge nothing of what you are pleas'd out of your love to ascribe unto me, yet I shall be always ready to give you my thoughts in the way of brotherly advice, whenever you shall stand in need of it: and at present as things are circumstanced, I do not see how you can wave or decline the call of the Church, either in conscience or reputation. For to begin with the latter; should you do so upon the most christian and cogent grounds in your own apprehensions, yet wrong interpretations will be put upon it, and so far as it is possible we ought to keep ourselves, not only extra noxam, but suspicionem also. But the point of conscience is of more moment: all things concurring, the providence of God in bringing you to that place, the judgment of the Church on your gifts and grace for their edification and example, the joint consent of the body of the congregation in your call, with present circumstances of a singular opportunity for preaching the word, I confess at this distance I see not how you can discharge that duty you owe to Jesus Christ (whose you are, and not your own, and must rejoice to be, what he will have you to be, be it more or less) in refusing a compliance unto these manifest indications of his pleasure; only remember that you sit down and count what it will cost you, which I know you will not be discouraged by; for the daily exercise of grace, and learning of wisdom should not be grievous unto us, tho' some of their occasions may be irksome. For the latter part of your letter, I know no difference between a Pastor and a Teacher, but what follows their different gifts; the office is absolutely the same in both; the power the same, the right to the administration of all ordinances every way the same; and at that great Church at Boston, in New-England, the Teacher was always the principal person; so was Mr. Cotton and Mr. Norton: where gifts make a difference, there is a dif-

a difference; otherwise there is none. I pray God guide you in this great affair; and I beg your prayers for myself in my weak infirm condition. I am

London, March 16.

Your affectionate friend and brother,

J. OWEN.

N. B. We may see the concurrent judgment of those two great Divines, Dr. Owen, and Dr. Goodwin, about the equal authority and power of a Pastor and a Teacher in a Church, as appears by two letters of Dr. Goodwin to the same person, upon this subject, printed at the end of the 4 Vol. of his works.



N^o 8.

TO CHARLES FLEETWOOD Esq;

DEAR SIR,

Altho' I am not able to write one word myself, yet I am very desirous to speak one word more to you in this world, and do it by the hand of my wife. The continuance of your entire kindness, knowing what it is accompanied withal, is not only greatly valued by me, but will be a refreshment to me, as it is even in my dying hour. I am going to him whom my soul has lov'd, or rather who has loved me with an everlasting love, which is the whole ground of all my consolation. The passage is very irksome, and wearisome, through strong pains of various sorts, which are all issu'd in an intermitting fever. All things were provided to carry me to London to day, according to the advice of my physicians; but we are all disappointed by my utter disability to undertake the journey. I am leaving the ship of the Church in a storm; but whilst the great Pilot is in it, the loss of a poor underrower will be inconsiderable. Live, and pray, and hope, and wait patiently, and do not despond; the promise stands invincible, that he will never leave us, nor forsake us. I am greatly afflicted at the distempers of your dear Lady; the good Lord stand by her, and support and deliver her. My affectionate respects to her, and the rest of your relations, who are so dear to me in the Lord. Remember your dying friend with all fervency; I rest upon it, that you do so, and am

August 22, 1683.

Yours entirely,

J. OWEN.

N. B. The Doctor died August 24.



A

*Funeral SERMON

ON

Dr. John Owen:

BY

DAVID CLARKSON, B.D.



PHIL. iii. 21.

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.



THE occasion why I pitch upon these words at this time, you are not unacquainted with. The Apostle in the beginning of this Chapter, warns the *Philippians* to beware of false teachers, he enforceth this with several arguments, the principal of which are drawn from his own example, in the body of the chapter; and then he concludes it with an elegant *antithesis*, opposing them to himself, and those that faithfully follow Christ with him: he makes use of this to enforce the dissuasive in a subserviency to his main scope, ver. 19, 20, 21. *Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly; whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

* This Sermon was preached the next Lord's day after the Doctor's interment.

who

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who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. You may observe an *antithesis* in all this; they *mind earthly things*, but our *conversion is in heaven*; their *god is their belly*, but we *look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*; their *end is destruction*, but our end is *glory*; their glory is *shameful*, they *glory in their shame*, but our glory shall be like that of our Lord Jesus Christ; that which they count most glorious, is *shameful*, but that which is vilest amongst us, shall be *glorious*: *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.*

The observation from hence is this:

Observ. *The bodies of the saints shall be conformed, and made like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ.*

The bodies of the saints, how vile soever now, shall at the resurrection be made and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. The Apostle gives a particular account of this, 1 Cor. xv. which I may take notice of in some particulars afterwards.

For the present, the great enquiry for the explaining of this truth is: How the bodies of deceased saints shall be like to the glorious body of Christ?

1. Negatively,

(1.) Not by any substantial change.

The substance of their bodies shall not be changed, as one of the ancients thought; by a mistake of the word *μετασχηματισα* used here, inferring that the bodies of the saints at the resurrection, shall not be of the same substance as they are now, but they shall then have *ethereal bodies*; whereas both the words *σχημα* and *μορφη* denote quality, a change in quality, not such a substantial change, as they imagined.

(2.) They shall be *like*, not equal.

The words do import a resemblance, not an equality, they shall not be equally glorious with the body of Christ. The Lord of glory in all things *must* have the preheminance, as he was *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, so he shall be exalted with greater glory. But then,

2. Positively: How shall they be fashioned like unto his glorious body?

You must not expect an exact account of this, it requires the tongue of an angel, or of some translated saint, that hath seen, and been invested with this glory, or hath had some full view of it. This is of the number of those things, we must believe though we see not, though we know not; it is an object of faith, not of sight, and so is incomprehensible to us, who walk by faith, not by sight. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for those that love him.* If this be true of what is offered us in the Gospel, much more of what is reserved in glory. *Now are we the sons of God*, saith the Apostle, *and it doth not appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. And who can describe that which doth not appear? Here we see but as in a glass, darkly, we have but a dim sight, such a sight of the kingdom of glory, as the ancient people of God had of the kingdom of the Messiah: Abraham *saw his day afar off, and rejoiced*. The wisdom of God hath drawn a veil before that glory, and he hath drawn it in great wisdom. If so be we had the full discovery of that glory that shall be put upon the bodies of the saints (not to speak of that upon the soul) if we had the full discovery of it here upon earth, it would be as hard to persuade the saints to be content to live on earth, as it is to persuade the men of the world to die. As in judgment to them, so in mercy to us, the veil still remaineth upon us; but though the veil be not quite withdrawn, yet the Lord is pleased in the Scripture to lift up, as it were, a corner of the veil, that we may see some glimerings of that glory which hereafter we shall see face to face, of which I shall give an account in some particulars.

The raised bodies of the saints shall be like the glorious body of Christ in these six or seven respects.

(1.) In respect of perfection, the body of Christ is perfect, so shall theirs be perfect, both in respect of parts, and degrees.

Their bodies shall have integrality of parts in exact proportion, there shall be no defect of members, no not of those that are now wanting, those that could find no remedy for lameness, or blindness, or mutilation on earth, shall find it in heaven; their bodies shall be raised in glory. So the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. xv. 43. *It shall be*

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be a glorious body: but it would not be so glorious if these imperfections and defects were not removed: and it shall have exact proportion too, there shall be no distinction in heaven between small and great; as there shall be no infant of days, so no decrepit old age, but all shall be reduced to a perfect stature, either to the stature of the first man *Adam* (for the resurrection shall be as a new creation) or to the stature of the *Lord from heaven*, as the Apostle calls our Lord Jesus. There shall be a conformation to the image of the heavenly, and so shall not want its proportion. The word *μορφή* in the text, signifies *outward form*, and *ἔξωθεν* denotes *external figure*. Now there could be no resemblance of the body of Christ in external form and figure, without such proportions.

(2.) The bodies of the saints shall be like the glorious body of Christ, in respect of impassibility.

The body of Christ is now impassible; that is, it is not liable to any sufferings, and so shall the bodies of the saints be, they shall be secured from all hurtful impressions from without, and all distempers from within; there shall be no hunger, nor thirst, no pain, no sickness, nor suffering whatsoever; the body shall suffer no disturbance, no inconvenience from earthly melancholly, or from dull phlegm, or fiery choler, or from the levity of a sanguine humour, but all shall be brought to such an exact temperament, as shall place them above any sufferings imaginable. The body will not be passible, not liable to corruption, or suffering; for that which is liable to suffering, is more or less liable to corruption, in whole, or in part; but the bodies of the saints will be incorruptible: *It is sown in corruption, but is raised in incorruption*, 1 Cor. xv. 42. their bodies shall be secured from whatever may blemish their glory, or impair their perfection, or any way disorder the constitution of it.

(3.) The bodies of the saints shall be like the glorious body of Christ, in respect of immortality.

The body of Christ is immortal, as the Apostle expresses it, *Rom. vi. 9. Christ dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him*; so it shall be with the bodies of the saints, *mortality shall then put on immortality*, as the Apostle expresses it, 1 Cor. xv. 53. when the bodies of the saints shall be raised, they shall commence, take the degree of souls, that is, they shall be immortal; they shall be more secured from death in heaven, than our first parents, while innocent, were secure from death in paradise: there shall not only be a *posse non mori*, a possibility not to die; but a *non posse mori*, an impossibility of dying, and that not arising from the nature of the body, but from the decree and purpose of God, from the victory of Christ, and from an immunity from sin; *Death shall be then swallowed up of victory*; death shall then lie under the feet of glorified ones, while they sing that song, 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55, 56, 57, *Death is swallowed up in victory: Oh, death where is thy sting! Oh, grave where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ*.

(4.) The bodies of the saints shall be like that glorious body of Christ, in respect of agility; that quickness, nimbleness, and wonderful celerity of glorified bodies, an instance whereof we have in the ascent of Christ's body from earth to heaven. The distance between the highest heaven, and the earth, is computed by astronomers to be some hundred millions of miles, so that if he finish'd that distance in a day, and we have no reason to think it so long, his body must move some millions of miles in an hour. But not to insist upon that, the bodies of the saints shall move when, where, how, and as fast as the soul pleases, without any reluctancy, without any toil or trouble to the body. The body shall be then immediately subject to the soul, as the soul shall be subject to God: nor will this motion be any disturbance to them. For what one of the ancients saith of the angels, shall be true of the bodies of the saints: "Wherever they move, they move not out of the blessed presence, out of the unhappying presence of Christ".

(5.) The bodies of the saints shall be like the glorious body of Christ, in respect of spirituality.

The body of Christ is now a spiritual body, not that it is changed into the nature of a spirit: Christ prevents that mistake, *Luke xxiv. 39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself, handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have*. The body is not changed into the nature of a spirit, but it is

said

said to be spiritual, because it is elevated to the highest degree of perfection and excellency that the body is capable of; brought as near to the angelical nature, as is consistent with the essence of a body. So the bodies of the saints shall be spiritual bodies, not changed into the nature of spirits, but they shall be purged, defecated, and cleansed from all the dross, and mud, and feculency of an earthly temper, and their senses shall be refin'd to heavenly, all their acts and motions shall be advanced to a spiritual perfection: there shall be none of those parts, none of those actions from which the body is denominated a *natural*, or an *animal* body: *It is shown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body*: there will be no need of meat, drink, or sleep. Our Lord Jesus Christ calls the raised bodies, *σώματα*, like to the angels in this respect, for in the resurrection, *They shall neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven*, Matth. xxii. 30.

(6.) The bodies of the saints shall be like the glorious body of Christ, in respect of splendor and beauty.

He gave a glimpse of that glory to his disciples in his transfiguration, *Mat. xvii. 1, 2. He took some of his disciples into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light*; it was glistering saith the other Evangelist; so shall the bodies of the saints be, they shall shine as the firmament and stars, *Dan. xii. 3. They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever*; not only as the firmament and stars, but as the sun, *Matth. xiii. 43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of the Father*. The purest and most lovely complexion, the most exquisite beauty on earth, is but darkness and deformity to that which shall shine forth in the glorified bodies of the saints: they shall shine as the sun, with a brighter luster than that of the sun, with such a splendor as shall never be clouded, never be eclipsed, never obscured. If the glory of Solomon did transport the Queen of Sheba, when she saw him, so that it is said, *there was no more spirit left within her*, 1 Kings x. 5. how ravishing will the sight of those glorious bodies be, whose splendor, whose glory shall as far exceed that of Solomon's, as the glory of the sun exceeds that of a lily? If a little converse with God put such a glory upon Moses's face, that the people were not able to behold it, their eyes were too weak; what glory will shine forth in the bodies of the saints, of those that converse with God for ever, who will see him face to face unto all eternity? *And we all with open face, saith the Apostle, beholding the glory of the Lord, as in a glass, are thereby changed from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord*. By this we may guess, indeed we can do little more than guess as to these things, farther than the Scripture leads us, but by this we may conjecture, how these bodies that are now so vile, should have such a glory derived upon them. The moon is of itself a dark, gross, opacous body, much like the earth, as it is now generally concluded, and capable of demonstration; but the sun darting its beams upon it, makes it a lightsome and glorious planet; so the bodies of the saints, though vile in themselves, yet by the glory of Christ darting on them, shall be made glorious bodies.

(7.) They shall be like him in respect of glorious dignities and privileges.

It is the glorious privilege of Christ, that he sits on the right hand of God, as Mediator, in respect of his human nature: *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand. Him hath God exalted to be a Prince, King of kings, and Lord of lords*; and he hath glorious regalities, ensigns of royalty, he hath a throne, and a crown, and a scepter: *Thy throne, O God* (it is spoken of Christ, as Mediator) *endures for ever, the scepter of thy kingdom, it is a right scepter, a scepter of righteousness*. And he shall exercise his royal power in a glorious manner, in a judiciary way, when he shall descend corporally to judge both the quick and the dead. Now the saints shall partake of these glorious privileges, or of something like them; they shall stand at the right hand of Christ: *Upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in gold of Ophir*, Psal. xlv. 9. The bodies of the saints shall have possession of a glorious kingdom, a kingdom of glory: *Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*. And they have glorious ensigns of royalty ascribed to them. They have a crown: when the chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a crown of glory; yea, the Lord himself will be their crown, as the expression is, *Isa. xxviii. 5. In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty to the residue of his people*. How glorious will

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it be for them, not only to be crowned by the Lord; but to have the Lord himself to be their crown? And they shall partake with him in the glory of judging quick and dead; they shall sit with him in his throne: *To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me on my throne; as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father on his throne.* They shall join with Christ as assessors in that glorious act of judgment; they shall not only judge the world, but the angels: *Know ye not, saith the Apostle, that we shall judge angels?*

And so much for the explication of this truth.

I might improve it several ways.

Use 1. By way of inference: If the bodies of the saints shall be so glorious, what glory then will be put upon their souls? If the body, the *vile body* shall be advanced to such a glory, what glory will be put upon the soul, which is the prime receptacle of the image of God? If glory be the portion of the body, the soul will much more exceed in glory.

Use 2. Let us here take notice of the love of Christ, the wonderful love of Christ, that he will take notice of the bodies of his people, of that which is so vile, bodies that are vile in themselves, and much more vile as they are instruments of sin; bodies that are vile while they live, but much viler when they are dead; noisome by putrefaction, or devoured by vermin, or dissolved into dust: Will the King of glory take notice of such vile things? Can he think thoughts of love concerning objects that are so unlovely? Yes, thoughts of love indeed, to make things so vile to be glorious, glorious like himself. Was it not enough that he redeemed men from wrath, delivered them from going into the pit of destruction? Was it not enough to make their souls glorious, but will he make their bodies glorious too? Was it not enough to make their bodies like the stars, or the sun, but to make them glorious like himself? Must his own glory be the pattern of theirs? Will nothing less satisfy the love of Christ, but imparting to these vile bodies his own glory? O what manner of love is this! So dear are the saints to him, such love he hath for them, as the very vilest thing belonging to them shall partake of his own glory, shall be made glorious like himself. As *Mephibosheth* said to *David*: *What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look on such a dead dog as I am?* With much more reason may we say, and that with astonishment: What are we, O Lord, that thou shouldst look upon such vile dust, which is even trampled under the feet of the beasts, that thou shouldst advance us to such a height of honour, that thou shouldst crown us with glory, with such a glory, a glory like thine own?

Use 3. For enquiry: How shall we know whether we are of the number of those whose vile bodies shall be fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ? There are several characters in this *chapter* by which it may be known: I shall only name them.

- (1.) Those that worship God in the spirit.
- (2.) Those that rejoice in Christ Jesus.
- (3.) Those whose conversation is in heaven. And,
- (4.) Those that look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; you have these two last in the *verse* before my text, but I must not insist on them.

Use 4. This should teach us to mix our grief for the loss of deceased relatives (those that die in the Lord) with joy. Some sorrow is allowed. They are reckoned among the worst of sinners, that are *ἀσύνετοι*, *without natural affection*. Stoical senselessness is inhuman, it is far from being christian, or evangelical. We may mourn for ourselves in reference to the great advantages that we loose by those we are bereaved of, especially if they are spiritual advantages: we may mourn in reference to the places where they lived, it portends evil to those places: *For the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.* When those that should stand in the gap are removed, there is wrath breaking in upon that people without any remedy: we may mourn in reference to ourselves, but in reference to them we have cause to rejoice. If we mourn, it should not be as those without hope. Immoderate sorrow hath its rise from self-love. Will you count him a friend who grieves at your preferment? The death of the saints is the high way to glory. The Apostle calls death, *a seedtime*, that is, a time of hope, not of mourning; and a time in reference to an expected harvest, is a time of rejoicing.

But we may mourn, we of this congregation have a particular cause to do it. I shall speak something of that excellent person that we have lost: but what I shall say, as the time will permit me, is but little concerning that great worthy. It was my

Dr. JOHN OWEN.

my unhappiness that I had so little and late acquaintance with him, which makes me not competent for such an undertaking; the account that is due to the world, requires a volume, and a better hand than mine, which I hope it will meet with in time: only let me touch some generals, which may help us to a sense of our loss, without which we are not like to make such an improvement of it, as the Lord expects from those upon whom his hand is fallen so heavy.

A great light is fallen; one of eminency for holiness, learning, parts, and abilities; a Pastor, a Scholar, a Divine of the first magnitude; holiness gave a divine lustre to his other accomplishments, it shined in his whole course, and was diffused through his whole conversation. I need not tell you of this that knew him, and observed that it was his great design to promote holiness in the power, life, and exercise of it among you. It was his great complaint that the power of it declined among professors. It was his care and endeavour to prevent or cure spiritual decays in his own flock. He was a burning and a shining light, and you for a while rejoiced in his light: alas! that it was but for a while, and that we can't rejoice in it still!

Those practical discourses which he published to the world, did give a taste that his spirit and temper was under the influence and power of holiness. There are some creatures that love to bark at the light, instead of making a better use of it: he met with such, I mean some that wrote against him, who thought themselves concerned to represent him odious to the world, but with great advantage to him, because they could not do it but by groundless surmises, and false suggestions, such as shewed the authors of them malicious, and rendred them ridiculous.

He was master of all parts of learning requisite to an accomplish'd Divine; those that understood him, and will be just, cannot deny him the reputation and honour of a great Scholar; and those that detract from him in this, seem to be led by a spirit of envy, that would not suffer them willingly to see so great an ornament among those that are of another persuasion. Indeed he had parts able to master any thing he applied himself unto, though he restrained himself to those studies which might render him most serviceable to Christ, and the souls of men. He had extraordinary intellectuals, a vast memory, a quick apprehension, a clear and piercing judgment; he was a passionate lover of light and truth, of divine truth especially, he pursued it unweariedly, through painful and wasting studies, such as impaired his health and strength, such as exposed him to those distempers with which he conflicted many years: and some may blame him for this as a sort of intemperance, but it is the most excusable of any, and looks like a voluntary martyrdom. However it shewed he was ready to spend, and be spent, for Christ: he did not bury his talent, with which he was richly furnished, but still laid it out for the Lord who had entrusted him. He preached while his strength and liberty would serve, then by discourse and writing.

That he was an excellent preacher, none will deny who knew him, and knew what preaching was, and think it not the worse because it is spiritual and evangelical. He had an admirable facility in discoursing on any subject, pertinently, and decently, and could better express himself *extempore*, than others with premeditation. He was never at a loss for want of expression; an happiness few can pretend to; and this he could shew upon all occasions, in the presence of the highest persons in the nation, and from the greatest to the meanest. He hereby shewed he had the command of his learning. His vast reading and experience was hereby made useful, in resolving doubts, clearing what was obscure, advising in perplexed and intricate cases, and breaches, or healing them, which sometimes seemed incurable. Not only we, but all his brethren will have reason to bewail the loss of him. His conversation was not only advantageous in respect of his pleasantness, and obligingness; but there was that in it which made it desirable to great persons, natives, and foreigners, and that by so many, that few could have what they desired.

I need speak nothing of his writings, though that is another head that I intimated, they commend themselves to the world. If holiness, learning, and a masculine unaffected stile can commend any thing, his practical discourses cannot but find much acceptance with those who are sensible of their soul concerns, and can relish that which is divine, and value that which is not common or trivial. His excellent *Comment upon the Hebrews* gain'd him a name and esteem, not only at home, but in foreign countries. When he had finished it (and it was a merciful providence that he lived to finish it) he said, Now his work was done, it was time for him to die.

A FUNERAL SERMON, &c.

There were several other discourses that seem controversial, and are so: our loss of him in this respect seems to be irreparable, for any thing that is in our present prospect. The due management of controversies require so great abilities, that there is not one among a hundred of our divines, are competently qualified for that; and the truths of the Gospel, which should be dearer to us than our outward concerns, are like to be suppressed, or adulterated, unless the Spirit of truth stir up and empower some to assert and vindicate them. He had a singular dexterity this way, for the managing of controversies; and those truths that he vindicated, were such as were most in danger by the apostatizing spirit of this age: some may think his genius led him much to study debates, but so far as I have observed, he did not affect to be an aggressor, but still was on the defensive, and proceeded with such temper, that he would rather oblige his adversary (if a lover of truth) than exasperate him. He made it appear he did not write so much against any man's person, as for the truth: I heard one of them declare, it would not trouble a man to be opposed in such a way as this great Doctor did treat his greatest antagonist. It is usual with persons of extraordinary parts, to straggle from the common road, and affect novelty, though thereby they lose the best company; as though they could not appear eminent, unless they march alone. But this great person did not affect singularity; they were old truths that he endeavoured to defend, those that were transmitted to us by our first reformers, and owned by the best divines of the Church of *England*. What the truth hath lost by this, I cannot easily say.

But it falleth heaviest, and most directly upon this congregation; we had a light in this candlestick; he did not only enlighten the room, but gave light to others far and near; but it is put out; we did not sufficiently value it; I wish I might not say, that our sins have put it out. We had a special honour and ornament, such as other Churches would much prize; but the crown is fallen from our heads: yea, may I not add, woe unto us, for we have sinned, we have lost an excellent pilot, and lost him when a fierce storm is coming upon us, when we have most need of him. I dread the consequences, considering the weakness of those that are left at the helm. If we are not sensible of it, it is because our blindness is great. Let us beg of God, that he would prevent what this threatens us with, and that he would make up this loss, or that it may be repaired, or at least that the sad consequences of it may be prevented. And let us pray in the last words of this dying person to me: "That the Lord would double his Spirit upon us, that he would not remember against us former iniquities; but that his tender mercies may speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low."

That he was an excellent preacher, none will deny who knew him, and knew what preaching was, and think it not the worse because it is spiritual and evangelical. He had an admirable facility in discoursing on any subject, pertinently, and decently, and could better express himself, than others with precipitation. He was never at a loss for want of words, but he could show upon all the highest persons in the nation, and from the greatest minds of his learning. His way was briefly made useful, in resolving doubts, clearing what was perplexed and intricate cases, and preaches or hearing them, which were termed instructible. Not only we but all his brethren will have reason to lament the loss of him. His conversation was not only advantageous in respect of his reasonings, and obligations; but there was that in it which made it desirable to great persons, natives, and foreigners, and that by so many, that few could have what they desired.

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Of the REVEREND and LEARNED

JOHN OWEN, D. D.

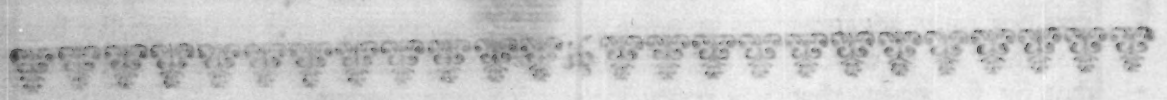
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The first of these is mentioned Rom. v. 2. And that, which is there called, an access into the favour of God, may in the text be called, an access unto the Father.



S E R M O N I.

The Nature and Beauty of Gospel Worship.

EPHES. ii. 18.
For through him we have an access by one Spirit to the Father.



In the foregoing verses the Apostle makes mention of a double reconciliation, wrought by the blood of the cross: the one of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* unto God; the other of the same persons one to another. There were two things in the law. First, Worship instituted under it. Secondly, The curse annexed unto it. The first of these being appropriated to the *Jews*, with an exclusion of the *Gentiles*, was the cause of unspeakable enmity and hatred between them. The latter, or the curse falling upon both, was a cause of enmity between God and both of them. The Lord Jesus Christ, in his death removing both these, wrought and effected the twofold reconciliation mentioned. First, He brake down the middle wall of partition between us, ver. 14. and so made both one; that is, between us, the *Jews* and *Gentiles*. He hath taken away all cause of difference that should hinder us to be one in him. And how hath he done this? By taking away the law of commandments contained in ordinances, ver. 15. that is, by abolishing that way of worship which was the *Jews* privilege and burthen, from which the *Gentiles* were excluded; so breaking down that wall of partition. Secondly, By the cross at his death he slew the enmity, or took away the curse of the law; so reconciling both *Jews* and *Gentiles* unto God, as ver. 16. By bearing the curse of the law he reconciled both unto God; by taking away and abolishing the worship of the law he took away all grounds of difference amongst them. Upon this reconciliation ensueth a twofold advantage or privilege: an access into the favour of God, who before was at enmity with them; and a new and more glorious way of approaching unto God in his worship, than that about which they were before at difference among themselves.

The first of these is mentioned *Rom. v. 2.* And that, which is there called, an *Access into this grace wherein we stand*, may in the text be called, an *Access unto the Father*: that is, the favour and acceptance with God which we do enjoy. Thus our access unto God is our sense of acceptance with him upon the reconciliation made for us by Jesus Christ. But this seems not to me to be the special intendment of the text; for that access unto God here mentioned, seems to be the effect of the reconciliation of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* among themselves: by the abolishing of the ceremonial worship, a new and more glorious way of worship being now provided for them both in common, is there expressed. Before the reconciliation made, one party alone had the privilege of the carnal worship then instituted; but now both parties have in common such a way of worship, wherein they have immediate access unto God; in which the Apostle asserts the beauty and glory of the Gospel worship of *Jews* and *Gentiles* above that, which enjoyed by the *Jews*, was a matter of separation and division between them. And this appears to be the intendment of the words from *ver. 17.* That which is here asserted, is not an immediate effect of the reconciliation made by the blood of Christ on the cross, but of his preaching peace unto, and calling both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, gathering them unto himself, and so to the worship of God: being called by the word of peace, both the one and the other, as to our worship, we have this access.

And the following words, to the end of the chapter, do make it yet more plain and evident. Sundry things doth the Apostle, upon the account of this their access unto God, speak of the *Gentiles*.

First, Negatively, that they are no more *strangers and foreigners*, *ver. 19.* that is, that they are not so in respect of the worship of God, as in that state and condition wherein they were before their calling, through a participation of the reconciliation made by the Blood of Christ. The Apostle had declared, *ver. 11, 12.* they were the uncircumcision, aliens, foreigners; that is, men who had no share in, nor admittance unto the solemn worship of God, which was empaied in the commonwealth of *Israel*; but now, says he, ye are so no more; that is, you have a portion and interest in that worship, where-with God is well pleased.

Secondly, Positively, the Apostle affirms two things of them. First, That they are *fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*, *ver. 19.* Secondly, That they were built up to be *an holy temple*, or an habitation to God, *ver. 20, 21, 22.* Both which relate to the solemn worship of God under the Gospel. The first asserts them to be now members of the church; the latter, that by and among them God was worshiped with that divine service, which came in the room of that which was appointed in the temple, now by Christ removed and taken away.

This being the design of the Holy Ghost in this place, I shall present it in this one proposition unto you.

That it is an eminent effect and fruit of our reconciliation unto God, and among our selves by the blood of Christ; that believers enjoy the privileges of the excellent, glorious, spiritual worship of God in Christ, revealed and required in the Gospel.

I shall in the prosecution of this subject,

I. Briefly prove, That we obtain this privilege as a fruit, and upon the account of the reconciliation made by the blood of Christ.

II. Shew, That the worship of the Gospel is indeed so beautiful, glorious, and excellent, that the enjoyment of it is an eminent privilege: which I shall principally manifest from the text, and in so doing open the several parts of it.

I. That believers enjoy this privilege as a fruit and effect of the death and blood of Jesus Christ, I shall confirm only with one or two places of Scripture, *Heb. ix. 8.* compared with *chap. x. 19, 20, 21, 22.* Whilst the first tabernacle was standing, before Christ by his death had removed it, and the worship that accompanied it, which was the partition wall mentioned that he brake down, there was no immediate admission unto God; the way into the *holiest* not made with hands, which we now make use of in the Gospel worship, was not yet laid open; but the worshipers were kept at a great distance, making their application unto God by outward, carnal ordinances. The tabernacle being removed, now a way is made, and an entrance is given to the worshipers

shippers, into the *holiest* in their worship. How is that obtained? by what means? *chap. x. 19, 20, 21.* it is *by the blood of Jesus Christ*, by the rending of his flesh. This privilege of entering into the holiest, which is a true expressing of all Gospel worship, could no otherwise be obtained for, nor granted unto believers, but by the blood of Christ. *We enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, by which he prepared, perfected, or *consecrated for us a new and living way* into it. Peter also gives us the same account of the rise of this privilege, *1 Ep. ii. 4, 5.* That which is ascribed unto believers is, that they offer up *spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ*. That is the worship whereof we speak. To fit them for, and enable them hereunto, they are *made a spiritual house, an holy priesthood*; they are both the temple wherein God dwells by his Spirit, and they are the priests that offer acceptable sacrifices unto him. By what means then do they attain this honour? by their *coming unto Christ*, and that as he was *disfellowed of men and chosen of God*. Herein the Apostle includes the whole mystery of his death and blood-shedding, wherein he was most openly rejected of men, and most eminently owned of God in his accomplishment of the work of reconciliation.

I shall not farther confirm the first part of the proposition, but proceed to evidence,

II. That the worship of God under the Gospel is so excellent, beautiful, and glorious, that it may well be esteemed a privilege purchased by the blood of Christ, which no man can truly and really be made partaker of, but by virtue of an interest in the reconciliation by him wrought. For *by him we have an access in one spirit unto God*.

This, as I said, I shall evince two ways.

First, Absolutely.

Secondly, Comparatively, in reference unto any other way of worship whatever. And the *first* I shall do from the text.

It is a principle deeply fixed in the minds of men, yea, ingrafted into them by nature, that the worship of God ought to be orderly, comely, beautiful and glorious. Hence men in all ages, who have thought it incumbent on them to imagine, find out, and frame the worship of God, or any thing thereunto belonging, have made it constantly their design to fix on things, either in themselves, or in the manner of their performance, to their judgment, beautiful, orderly, comely and glorious. And indeed that worship may be well suspected not to be according to the mind of God, which comes short in these properties of order and beauty, comeliness and glory. I shall add unto this, only this reasonable assertion, which no man can well deny, *viz.* That what is so in his worship and service, God himself is the most proper Judge. If then we evince not that spiritual Gospel worship, in its own naked simplicity, without any other external, adventitious helper or countenance, is most orderly, comely, beautiful and glorious, the Holy Ghost in the Scripture being judge, we shall be content to seek for these things where else, as it is pretended, they may be found. To this end,

I. The first thing in general observable from these words is, that in the spiritual worship of the Gospel, the whole blessed Trinity, and each Person therein distinctly, do in that oconomy and dispensation, wherein they act severally and peculiarly in the work of our redemption, afford distinct communion with themselves unto the souls of the worshipers. So are they all here distinctly mention'd: *Through him*, that is, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, *we have access by one Spirit*, that good and holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, *unto God*, that is, the Father; for so is that name to be taken *ὑποστατικῶς*, *personally*, when it is mention'd in distinction from the Son and Spirit. There is no act, part, or duty of Gospel worship, wherein the worshipers have not this distinct communion with each Person in the blessed Trinity. The particulars shall be afterwards spoken unto.

This is the general order of Gospel worship, the great rubrick of our service. Here in general lieth its decency, that it respects the mediation of the Son, through whom we have access, and the supplies and assistance of the Spirit, and a regard unto God, as a Father. He that fails in any one of these, he breaks all order in Gospel worship. If either we come not unto it by Jesus Christ, or perform it not in the strength of the Holy Ghost, or in it go not unto God as a Father, we transgress all the rules of this worship. This is the great canon, which if it be neglected,

ed, there is no decency in whatever else is done in this way. And this in general is the glory of it. Worship is certainly an act of the soul, *Matth.* xxii. 37. The body hath its share by concomitancy and subserviency to the direction of the mind. The acts of the mind and soul receive their advancements and glory from the object about which they are conversant. Now that in this Gospel worship, is God himself in his Son and Holy Ghost, and none else. Acting faith on Christ for admission, and on the Holy Ghost for his assistance, so going on in his strength; and on God, even the Father, for acceptance, is the work of the soul in this worship. That it hath any thing more glorious to be conversant about, I am as yet to learn. But these things will be handled apart afterwards. This in general is the order and glory of that worship of which we speak.

2. The same is evident from the general nature of it, that it is an access unto God. *Through him we have an access to God.* There are two things herein that set forth the excellency, order, and glory of it. (1.) It brings an access. (2.) The manner of that access, intimated in the word here used, it is *προσάγωγη*.

(1.) It is an access, an approach, a drawing nigh unto God: so the Apostle calls it, a *drawing near*, *Heb.* x. 22. *Let us draw nigh with a true heart*, that is, unto God, in the holiest, *ver.* 19. In the first giving out of the law, and instituting the legal worship, the people were commanded to keep at a distance, and they were not, on pain of death, so much as to *touch* the mount where the presence of God was, *Exod.* xix. 12. And accordingly they stood afar off, whilst *Moses* drew near to the thick darkness where God was, *chap.* xx. 21. So not only when the High Priest went into the most holy place once a year with blood (of which afterwards) but when the priests in their courses went into the holy place to burn incense daily, the people were kept without, as *Luke* i. 10. But this Gospel worship is our access or drawing nigh to God; no interposition of vails, or any other carnal ordinance whatever. All is made open, and a *new and living way* of access given unto us, *Heb.* x. 20. And what in general can be added to set forth the glory of this worship, to a soul that knows what it is to draw nigh to God, I know not. The Heathens of old derided the *Egyptians*, who through many stately edifices, and with most pompous ceremonies, brought their worshipers to the image of an ape. I say no more; but let them look to it, how they will acquit themselves, who frame much of their worship in a ceremonious access to an altar, or an image. The plea of referring unto God at the last, hath been common to all idolaters of what sort soever, from the foundation of the world.

(2.) It is a *προσάγωγη* that we have in this worship, a manuduction unto God, in order, and with much glory. It is such an access as men have to the presence of a king, when they are handed in by some favourite or great person. This, in this worship, is done by Christ. He takes the worshipers by the hand, and leads them into the presence of God; there presenting them, (as we shall see) saying, *Behold, I and the children which God hath given me*, *Heb.* ii. 13. This is the access of believers; thus do they enter into the presence of God. Some, it may be, will be ready to say, that a man may be ashamed to speak such great things as these of poor worms, who have neither order in their way, nor eloquence in their words, nor comeliness in their worship. Let such men know that they must yet hear greater things of them; and it is meet indeed they should be in all things conformable unto Christ; and therefore have neither form, nor comeliness, nor beauty in themselves, their way, or their worship to the eyes of the world, as *Isai.* liii. 2. And *the world knows not* them and their ways, because *it knew not him* nor his ways, *1 Joh.* iii. 1. But if God may be allowed to judge in his own matters, the spiritual worship of the Saints is glorious, since in it they have such an access, such a manuduction unto God.

3. From the immediate object of this worship, and that is God. We have an access to God. It is, as I said, the Father who is here peculiarly intended; God as God: He who is the beginning and end of all, whose nature is attended with infinite perfection: He, from whom a sovereignty over all doth proceed, is the formal object of all divine and religious worship. Hence divine worship respects, as its object, each Person of the blessed Trinity equally, not as this or that Person, but as this or that Person is God; that is the formal reason of all divine worship. But yet as the second Person is considered as vested with his office of mediation, and the Holy Ghost as the Comforter and Sanctifier of his Saints; so God the Father is in a peculiar

peculiar manner the object of our faith, and love, and worship. So *Peter* tells us, *1 Ep. i. 21.* That *through Christ we believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory.* Christ being considered as Mediator, God that raised him from the dead, that is the Father, is regarded as the ultimate object of our worship; though worshipping him who is the Father as God, the other Persons are in the same nature worshiped. This whole matter is declared, *Gal. iv. 6,* (which I cannot now particularly open) with this explanation, that in our access unto God, Christ being considered as the Mediator, and the Holy Ghost as our Comforter, Advocate, and Assister, the Saints have a peculiar respect unto the Person of the Father.

There are two things that hence arise, evidencing the order, decency, and glory of Gospel worship. (1.) That we have in it a direct and immediate access unto God. (2.) That we have access unto God, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ours in him.

(1.) This is no small part of the glory of this worship, that our access is unto *God himself.* When outward worship was in its height and glory, the access of the worshipers immediately was but unto some visible sign and pledge of God's presence. Such was the temple it self; such was the ark, and the mercy seat. So *Paul* describing the tabernacle and temple worshipers, *Heb. x. 1.* calls them *προσρχομένους*, the comers unto sacrifices. There was, as it were, a stop put upon their access in the visible representations of God's majesty and presence to which they did approach. But now, in this spiritual worship of the Gospel, the Saints have direct and immediate access unto God, *the way into the holiest* not made with hands being laid open unto them all. And where they are enjoined the use of any outward signs, as in the Sacraments, it is not, as it were to stop them there from entering into heaven, but to help them forward in their entrance, as all know who are acquainted with their true nature and use. I do not say, that any of the worship of old was limited in the sensible pledge and tokens of God's presence; but only that the spirit of the worshipers was kept in subjection, so as to approach unto God only as he exhibited himself to their faith in those signs, and not immediately as we do under the Gospel.

(2.) We have in this spiritual worship of the Gospel access unto God, *as a Father.* I shewed in the opening of the words, that God is distinctly proposed here as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him our God and Father. Hence are we said to come *to the throne of grace*, *Heb. iv. 16.* That is, unto God, as he is gloriously exalted in the dispensation of grace, in kindness, love, mercy, in a word, as a Father. God on the throne of grace, and God as a Father is all one consideration; for as a Father he is all love, grace, and mercy to his children in Christ. When God came of old to institute his worship in giving of the law, he did it with the dreadful and terrible representation of his majesty, that the people chose not to come near, but went and *stood afar off*, and said unto Moses, *Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die*, *Exod. xx. 18, 19.* And by this dreadful representation of the majesty of God, as the object of that worship, were they kept in fear and bondage all their days. But now are the Saints encouraged to make their approach unto God as a Father, the glory whereof the Apostle excellently expresseth, *Rom. viii. 14, 15.* That fear and *bondage*, wherein men were kept under the law, is now removed, and in the place thereof a spirit of children, with reverent boldness going to their Father, is given unto us. This, I say, adds to the glory, beauty and excellency of Gospel worship. There is not the meanest believer, but with his most broken prayers and supplications hath an immediate access unto God, and that as a Father; nor the most despised Church of Saints on the earth, but it comes with its worship into the glorious presence of God himself. And this I shall add by the way; That mens attempting to worship God, who are not interested in this privilege of access unto him, is the ground of all the superstitious idolatry that is in the world. I shall instance in two things, which are the springs of all others.

[1.] Having not experience of the excellency of this privilege, nor being satisfied with the use of it, men have turned aside to the worship of Saints and Angels in heaven. This is the very substance of all the reasons that the *Papists* plead in the justification of that superstition. To have access to God! It is too great a boldness to come to him immediately; and so it becomes us humbly to make use of the favourites of the court of heaven, of Saints and Angels, to desire them to entreat with God for us. Now not to speak of their unacquaintedness with the mediation of Christ

herein,

herein, which is plain infidelity: what is this but directly saying, we understand nothing of Gospel worship (wherein believers by Christ have a direct *access with boldness* to God himself) and therefore it is that we had rather fix on this *voluntary humility*, as the Apostle calls it, *Col. ii. 18.* than venture on this access unto God? This, I say, is the reasoning of men unacquainted with this part of the glory of Gospel worship.

[2.] Hence are they forced to invent outward, visible pledges and signs of God's presence, as they imagine, to which they may have access; seeing they are unacquainted with that which is directly unto God himself. Hence images and pictures, altars and the *East* must be regarded in worship, with which they can have an immediate conversation, have an access in their thoughts to them, and, as they think, by them unto God. And on the same account must the Sacraments be changed, and that which was appointed to assist us in our entrance unto God, be made a God, that men may have an easy access unto him. Carnal men, that know nothing of the other, whose souls are not at all moulded or affected by any pure act of faith, are here stirred by their senses, and act by them in their worship. And this is the ground wherein all their pompous rites, invented by men in the worship of God, do grow; even a design and engine to afford carnally minded men somewhat to be conversant about in their worship, who have no principle to enable them to use this privilege of approaching unto God himself. It is true, they will say, it is God alone whom they worship, and whom they intend to draw nigh unto: but I must needs say, that if they knew what it were to do so immediately by Christ, they would be satisfied therewith, and not seek such outward helps in their way, as they do.

4. It appears from the principal procuring cause and means of this our access to God, which is *Jesus Christ*; *through him* we have this access; this is a new spring of beauty and glory, which we must consider in the particulars of it. That access which the people of God had to the outward pledge of his presence, was by their *High Priest*, and that not in his own person, but barely in his representation of them, and that but *once a year*: but in the worship of the Gospel, the Saints have an access through Christ unto God himself in their own persons, and that continually. Now we have this access *through Christ* upon many accounts.

(1.) Because he hath purchased and procured this favour for us, that we should so approach unto God, and find acceptance with him. *We are accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. I must not stay to shew, how by paying a ransom for us, and *bearing our iniquities*, he hath answered the law, removed the curse, reconciled us to God, pacified his anger, satisfied justice, procured for us eternal redemption; all which belongs to his procuring for us this favour of acceptance with God. The Apostle gives us the sum of it, *Heb. ii. 17.* He hath as an High Priest *made reconciliation for the sins of the people*, on the account whereof they have an access *by faith unto this grace*, Rom. v. 1, 2. In this sense have we our access unto God through Christ. He hath purchased it for us. It is no small portion of the price of his blood. Nothing else could procure it; not all the wealth of the world, not all the worth of Angels in heaven; none could do it but himself. Go into the most pompous, stately place of outward worship upon the earth, consider all the wealth and glory of its structure and ornaments; it is an easy thing for a wise man to guess what it all cost, and what is the charge of it; however none so foolish but can tell you it is all the price of money; it was *bought with silver and gold, and corruptible things*; it is the thick clay; and he that hath most money, may render that kind of worship most beauteous and glorious. But now the Gospel worship of believers is the price of the *blood of the Son of God*. Access to God for sinners could no other way be obtained. Let men, as the prophet speaks, *lavish gold out of their bags*, Isa. xlvi. 6. upon their idols; their self-invented worship shall come as short in true glory and beauty of the meanest prayers of poor Saints, as the purchase of corruptible things doth of the fruit of the blood and death of the Son of God. 1 *Pet. i. 18, 19.*

(2.) We have this access from Christ, in as much as he hath opened, prepared, and dedicated a way for us to enter into the presence of God. Favour being procured, a way of entrance is also to be provided; otherwise poor souls might say, there is water indeed in the well, but *the well is deep, and we have not wherewith to draw*. There is an acceptance purchased for us in the presence of God; but by what way shall we come unto him? I say, he hath provided for us also a way whereby we may enter, *Heb. x. 19, 20.* *By a new and living way*. The way into the holiest of old was through

through the vail that hung always before, which the Apostle calls the *second vail*, chap. ix. 3. The form and use thereof you have, *Exod. xxvi. 31, 32, &c.* Through this vail the High Priest entred into the holy place. Instead heretof, for an entrance into the presence of God in the holy place not made with hands, Christ hath provided and dedicated a *new and living way* for us. This way is himself, as he telleth *Thomas, Joh. xiv. 6. I am the way*: it is *by him* alone that any can obtain an access unto God. But as to our constant approach in worship, there is a peculiar respect had unto his suffering for us in the flesh. We enter by his blood, and *through his flesh*. How is that? As men being to go to some great potentate, or general in an army, have, it may be, some word or token which they shew, declare, or make use of, if by any they are hindered in their address: so is it with believers; the law would stop them in their access to God, so would sin and Satan; but their being *sprinkled with the blood of Christ*, is the token that lays all open unto them, and removes all obstacles out of the way: and when they come into the presence of God, it is the suffering of Christ in the *flesh* that they insist on as to their acceptation with him. They go to God through him, in his name, *making mention of his righteousness*, death, and blood-shedding, pleading for acceptance on his account. This is their *new and living way* of going unto God, this path they tread, this entrance they use; and no man can obtain an access unto God, but by an interest herein. I wonder not at all, that men who know not this way, who have no share, nor ever took one step in it, do fix on any kind of worship whatever, rather than once make trial what it is to place the glory of their worship in an access unto God; seeing they have no interest in this way, without which all attempts after it would be altogether fruitless and vain. Now this adds to the order, and encreaseth the glory and beauty of the spiritual worship of the Gospel. Go to the Mass-book and the rubrick of it; you will see how many instructions and directions they give priests, about the way of going into their *Sanctum*, and to their altars; how they must bow and bend themselves, sometimes one way, sometimes another, sometimes kneel, sometimes stand, sometimes go backward, sometimes forward: this is their way to the *bread-god*: this they call order, and beauty, and glory, and with such like things are poor simple fots deluded, and carnal wretches, enemies to Christ and his Spirit, blinded to their eternal ruin. Surely methinks this way of Gospel access to God, is far more comely and glorious: it is in and by Christ, a way dedicated by himself on purpose; it is sprinkled with his blood; it is opened by his suffering in the flesh; and abides *new and living* for ever. Were not blindness come on men to the utmost, were it not evident that they can see nothing *afar off*, that they are wholly carnal and unspiritual, *swallowing not the things of God*, it were impossible that they should reject these pearls of the Gospel for the husks of swine, such things as they shall never be able to vie with the old Heathen in. This only may be said in their excuse, that they cast away and reject what they had no share in, for that which is most properly their own.

(3.) We have this access through Christ, in that he is *enter'd before us* into the presence of God to make way for our access unto him, and our acceptance with him. So the Apostle, *Heb. iv. 14. We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.* He is gone already into the presence of God to that purpose. The same Apostle tells us, *chap. vi. 19, 20. Let us look to that within the vail, whether Jesus the forerunner is for us enter'd*: *προδρομος υπερ ημων εστηλθεν*. The words are better rendred, *The forerunner for us is entred*. He is a forerunner for us; one that is gone into the presence of God to declare that all his saints are coming to him, coming into his presence with their solemn worship and oblations: he is entred into heaven himself, to carry as it were tidings; and make way for the entrance of his saints. This is no small encouragement to follow him: he is gone before for us, and is in continual expectation of the coming of them whose forerunner he is; as it is the manner of those who take that office. And this also adds to the glory of Gospel worship, with them to whom Christ is precious and honourable: with them by whom he is despis'd, it is no wonder if his ways be so also. This belongs also to the rubrick, and adds to the order of Gospel worship. It is an access to God, even the Father, in the holy place not made with hands, on the account of the atonement made, and favour and acceptance purchased by Jesus Christ, being sprinkled with his blood, and following him, as one that is gone before to provide admittance for us. Here is order and beauty too, if we have either faith or eyes to apprehend or perceive what is so.

(4.) We

(4.) We have this access through Christ, as he is *the High Priest over the house of God*. This the Apostle at large declares, and much insists upon in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*. One or two places shall suffice to instance in. *Chap. iv. 14*, to the *16*. the inference which the Apostle makes from this consideration, that Christ is our *High Priest entered into heaven*, is, that we should *draw nigh unto the throne of grace*: and because he is such an holy Priest as he there describes, that we should draw nigh with *boldness*, or spiritual confidence of our acceptance with God. And this the Apostle manageth at large throughout that Epistle: that notwithstanding all the outward glory and splendor of the legal worship, yet that which is appointed in the Gospel is far to be preferred before it, in as much as the High Priest of this is unspeakably above the high priest by whom that was principally administered. And again, *chap. x. 21, 22*. the encouragement to draw nigh to God is taken from this, that we have an *High Priest over the house of God*. And it is also considerable, what the Holy Ghost requireth in them, who should come nigh to worship God under the guidance and conduct of this blessed and merciful High Priest: is it, that they have such vestments and ornaments in their admission? No; but faith, and sanctification, and holiness are the great qualifications of these worshipers. *Let us draw nigh*, saith he, *in full assurance of faith, &c. and our bodies washed with pure water*; that is, purified with the blood of Christ, typified in the water of baptism; or else, it may be, effectually cleans'd in soul and body by the Holy Ghost, who is frequently compar'd to *water* in the work of purifying and sanctifying the souls of believers.

Upon this general head I might make a long stand, to evidence the beauty, order, and glory of the spiritual worship of God, in that it is our access to God through Christ, *as the great High Priest over the house of God*. This indeed is so great, that the Apostle makes it the sum of his whole dispute about the excellency of the Gospel, and our coming to God thereby, *Heb. viii. 12*. This is, saith he, upon the matter, *the sum of all*. Those with whom we have to do, they had an High Priest, in whom, and the administration by him perform'd, consisted the glory of all their worship. *We* also, saith he, *have an high priest* no less than they had; but herein there is no comparison between them and us, that we have *such* an High Priest, whom he describes: first, from his own dignity, honour, and glory; he is *set on the right hand of the Majesty of heaven*: secondly, from his office or ministry; namely, that he ministers not in a tabernacle, such as was that of *Moses* and *Solomon's* temple, but *in heaven* it self, the place of the glorious presence and immediate manifestation of God's glory, which he calls, *the tabernacle which the Lord pitched*; that is, which he appointed for the place of worship to his saints under the ministry of Christ their High Priest. And though other places are necessary here on earth for their assemblies, as they are men clothed with flesh and infirmities, yet there is none pitched, appointed, or consecrated for the holy and solemn acceptance of their service, but heaven it self, where the High Priest is always ready to administer it before God. And as to the assemblies here below, all places are now alike. And what can be more glorious than this; namely, that the whole spiritual worship of the Gospel, perform'd here on earth by the saints, is administered in heaven by such an holy Priest, who is at the right hand of the throne of the majesty of God, and yet under his conduct we have by faith an entrance into the presence of God?

Go too now, you by whom the spiritual worship of the Gospel is despis'd, that unless it be adorn'd, as you say, or rather defiled with the rites and ceremonies of your own invention, think there is no order, comeliness, or beauty in it. Set your selves to find out whatever pleaseth your imaginations; borrow this of the *Jews*, that of the *Pagans*, all of the *Papists* that you think conducing to that end and purpose; *lavish gold out of the bag* for the beautifying of it: will it compare with this glory of the worship of the Gospel, that is all carried on under the conduct and administration of this glorious High Priest? It may be they will say, That they have that too, and that ornaments do not hinder but that they have also their worship attended with that glory relating to the holy Priest. But do they think so indeed, and do they no more value it than it seems they do? Why are they not contented with it, but they must find out many inventions of their own to help to set it off? Surely it is impossible that men thoroughly convinc'd of its spiritual excellency, should fall into that fond conceit of making additions of their own unto it. Nor do they seem rightly to weigh, that the holy God doth all along oppose this spiritual excellency of Gospel worship

to the outward splendor of rites and ordinances, instituted by himself for a time; so that what men seek to make up in these things, doth but absolutely derogate from the other; and all will one day know, whether it be for want of excellency in the spiritual administration of the Gospel worship under, and by the glorious High Priest, or for want of minds enlighten'd to discern it, and hearts quicken'd to experience it; that some do lay all the weight of the beauty of Gospel worship on matters that they either find out themselves, or borrow from others, who were confessedly blind as to all spiritual communion with God in Christ. But *if any man list to contend, we have no such custom, neither the Church of God*: only I hope it will not be accounted a crime, that any please themselves, and are contented with that glory and beauty in their worshipping of God, which is given unto it from hence, that they have in it an access to God by Jesus Christ, as the great High Priest of their profession and service. However, I am sure this is, and may well be an unspeakable encouragement, and comfort in the duty of drawing nigh unto God, to all the saints, whether in their persons, families, or assemblies, that Jesus Christ is the great High Priest that admits them to the presence of God, who is the Minister of that heavenly tabernacle where God is worshiped by them. If we are but able, as the Apostle speaks, to *look to the things that are not seen*, 2 Cor. iv. 18. that is, with eyes of faith, we shall find that glory that will give us rest and satisfaction: and for others, we may pray as *Elisha* for his servant, that *the Lord would open their eyes*, and they would quickly see the naked poor places of the saints assemblies, not only attended with *horses and chariots of fire*, but also Christ *walking in the midst of them*, in the glory wherewith he is describ'd, Rev. i. 13, 14, 15. which surely their painted or carved images will be found to come short of. And if the Lord Jesus Christ be pleas'd in his unspeakable love to call his churches, and ministers, *his glory*, as he doth, 2 Cor. viii. 23. surely these may be contented to make him *their only glory*. To which purpose we may observe,

[1.] Our Saviour Christ warns us of some, who *thought to be heard* for their heathenish *vain repetition and much babblings*, Mat. vi. 7. I will not make application of it unto any: but this I say, that men will not be a little mistaken, if they think to be heard for any carnal, self-invented furtherance of their devotion. But here lies the joy and confidence of the poor saints; they have a merciful High Priest over the house of God, by whom they are encourag'd to draw nigh with boldness to the throne of grace; he takes them by the hand, and leads them into the presence of God, where, through his means, they obtain a favourable acceptance.

[2.] Nor need they be solicitous about their outward estate and condition. This was the misery of the *Jews* of old, that when they were driven from *Jerusalem*, and carried into captivity, they were deprived of all the solemn worship of God; they had no high priest, no sacrifice, no altar, tabernacle, or solemn assemblies, which were all tied to that place. Hence we find how bitterly *David* complains, when, by the persecution of *Saul*, he was for a season driven from the place of God's holy and solemn worship: he saw not the glorious ornaments of the High Priest, nor the beautiful structure of the tabernacle, nor the order of the levites and priests in worship. It is now otherwise with the people of God; be they never so poor, and destitute of all outward accommodations; are their assemblies in the *mountains, in the caves and dens of the earth*, Christ, according to his promise, is *in the midst of them* as their High Priest, and they have in their worship all the order, glory, and beauty (I mean observing Gospel rules) that in any place under heaven they can enjoy, and be made partakers of: all depends on the presence of Christ, and their access to God by him; and he is excluded from no place, but thinks any place adorn'd sufficiently for him, which his saints are met in, or driven unto. *Let the hands that hang down be lifted up, and feeble knees be strengthened*: whatever their outward, distressed condition may be, here is order, beauty, and glory in the worship of God, above all that the World can pretend unto.

[3.] Here lies encouragement to them upon a spiritual account, as to the state of things between God and their own souls: they have discoveries made unto them of the glory, majesty, and holiness of God; they know that he is *a consuming fire*; they have visions of his excellencies, which the world is not acquainted with; they are also sensible of their own poverty, wretchedness, sin, weakness, how unfit, how unable to approach unto him, or to have to do with him in his holy worship; they are ashamed of their own prayers and supplications, and could oftentimes when they are gone through,

with them undone again, considering how unanswerable they are to the greatness and holiness of God. In this condition there is a plentiful relief tendred to faith from the consideration of this High Priest. That this may be more evident, and that the beauty and glory of Gospel worship may be by them farther discovered, I shall particularly insist on some parts of it.

1.) Our High Priest bears and takes away all the sinfulness and failings that are in, or do accompany the holy worship of his saints. The world is apt to despise the worship of the saints as mean and contemptible, unmeet for the majesty of God: this puts them on the inventing of what they suppose more glorious and beautiful, though God abhors it: but the saints themselves know that of their defects, wants, and failings in their worship, that the world know not of, and how unfit it is and unsuited to the holy majesty of God with whom they have to do: they know how the *bitter root* of unbelief in their hearts *springs up* and *defiles* them and their duties; how effectually vanity works in their minds, and a secret loathsomeness in their wills, in their best duties, and most solemn acts of worship; besides innumerable other sinful distempers, that oftentimes get ground and place in their hearts. These they know are the things that in and of themselves are enough to defile, pollute, and render abominable all their worship; yea, and if God should *mark what is amiss*, the guilt of their holy worship is enough to make both it, and them that perform it, to be forever rejected. But now here is their relief; here beauty, glory, and order is recovered to their worship; Christ, as their High Priest, takes away all the evil, filth, and iniquity of their holy things, that they may be presented pure, and holy, and glorious before God. So did *Aaron* typically of old, *Exod.* xxviii. 38. Thus doth Christ, our High Priest, really answer for all that is amiss, all failings, all miscarriages in his saints, them he takes on his own score; and what is from his Spirit, that enters into the presence of the holy God. So *Eph.* v. 25, 26, 27. he presents it to himself, and by him it is presented unto God. By this means doth the Lord Christ preserve the glory and beauty of Gospel worship, notwithstanding all the defects, and failings, and defilements that from the weakness and sins of his saints, do seem to cleave unto it.

2.) This is not enough: besides the weakness, sinfulness, and imperfections that attend the duties, for which they may be justly rejected, there is not any thing of worth in them for which they may be accepted; nothing that should yield a sweet savour unto God; wherefore Christ, as the High Priest by whom all believers have their access unto God, takes their duties and prayers, and *adds incense* unto them, that they may have a sweet savour in heaven, *Rev.* viii. 3. The altar is the place of the priests offering their sacrifices of prayers; and our altar is in heaven: other men may appoint theirs elsewhere. The Lord Christ, the High Priest in the temple of God in heaven, and in the holy place not made with hands, is *the Angel that stands at the altar before the Lord*; the golden altar of incense before the throne; not the altar for sacrifice, which he hath finished already; but only the altar of incense or intercession, remains. On this golden altar are the prayers of all saints offered: but how came they to be acceptable unto the Lord? Why, this High Priest hath *much incense*, a bottomless store and treasure of righteousness that he adds unto them, which is the only sweet perfume in the presence of the Lord. This makes all their worship glorious indeed. Christ, the High Priest, takes away the iniquity and failings of them, he adds his own righteousness unto it, and so in his own person offers it on the golden altar, that is, his own self, before the throne of God continually.

Now as this tends exceedingly to the consolation of believers, so it stains the glory of all the outward pompous worship that some are so delighted in. For believers, what can more tend to their comfort and encouragement, than that the Lord Christ takes their poor weak prayers, which themselves are oftentimes ashamed of, and humbled for, and are ready to cry out against themselves by reason of them, and what by taking away the evil of them, what by adding the incense of his own righteousness, makes them acceptable at the throne of grace? They little know what beauty and glory those very duties which they perform, and are troubled at, are cloathed withal: and for the beauty and glory of Gospel worship, in comparison of all the self-invented rites of men, how will one thought of faith about this administration of Christ in heaven with the prayers of the saints, cast contempt and shame upon them? What is all their gaudy preparation, in comparison of the High Priest of the saints offering up their prayers on the golden altar before the throne of God? This is order, comeliness, and beauty.

3.) Christ,

3.) Christ, as the High Priest of the saints, presents both their persons and their duties in the presence of, and before the Lord. This is that which was signified of old in the High Priest's precious stones set in gold on his breast and shoulders, with the names of the children of *Israel* in them, *Exod. xxviii. 21.* Christ, our High Priest, is entered into the holy place for us, and there presents all his saints, and their worship before the Lord, being *not ashamed to call them brethren*, and saying of them, *Behold I and the children which the Lord hath given me.*

And this is the fourth thing in the words, manifesting the excellency and glory of Gospel worship, taken from the principal procuring cause. It is an access to God, *through Christ.*

S E R M O N II.

5. **T**HIS also adds greatly to the glory and excellency of evangelical worship, that we have in it an access unto God, *in one Spirit, or by one Spirit.* I shall shew in brief, (1.) How we have it *by the Spirit.* (2.) How *in one, or by one Spirit.*

(1.) That by the Spirit the Holy Ghost is here intended, is not question'd by any. He is that *one Spirit* who works in these things, and *divideth to every one as he pleaseth*, 1 Cor. xi. 13. I shall not here handle the whole work of the Holy Ghost in, and upon the souls of the saints, in, and for the performance of all the duties of worship wherein they draw nigh unto God, by Christ, and obtain communion with him, as absolutely considered; but only so far as his work renders the worship we speak of beautiful and comely, which is the matter we have in hand. And that I shall do in some few considerations.

[1.] The Lord Jesus Christ hath promised to send his Spirit to believers, to enable them both for matter and manner in the performance of every duty required in the word, *Isa. lix. ult.* He will give his word and Spirit: the promise of the one and the other is of equal extent and latitude. Whatever God proposeth in his word to be believed; or requireth to be done, that he gives his Spirit to enable to believe and do accordingly: there is neither promise nor precept, but the Spirit is given to enable believers to answer the mind of God in them: nor is the Spirit given to enable unto any duty, but what is in the word required. The Spirit and the word in their several places have an equal latitude; the one as a *moral rule*, the other as a *real principle of efficiency*: hence they who require duties which the word enjoins nor, have need of other assistances than what the Spirit of grace will afford them: and those who pretend to be led by the Spirit beyond the bounds of the word, had need provide themselves of another Gospel. Now with promises hereof doth the Gospel abound. He shall *lead us into all truth*; he shall *teach us all things*; he shall *abide with us for ever*: having given his disciples precepts for their whole duty to God and himself, he promiseth them his Spirit to abide with them, to enable them for the accomplishment of them.

[2.] There are *three* things that are needful for the right performance of Gospel worship. (1.) *Light and knowledge*, that we may be acquainted with the mind and will of God in it; what it is that he accepteth and approveth, and is appointed by him; that we may know how to *choose the good and refuse the evil*, like the sheep of Christ *hearing his voice and following him, not hearkening to the voice of a stranger.* (2.) *Grace* in the heart, so that there may be in this access unto God, a true, real, spiritual, saving communion, obtained with him in those acts of faith, love, delight and obedience which he requireth, without which it is in any thing *impossible to please God.* (3.) *Ability* for the performance of the duties that God requireth in his worship, in such a manner as he may be glorified, and those who are called to his worship edified in their most holy faith. Where these three concur, there the worship of

God is perform'd in a due manner, according to his own mind and will, and so consequently is excellent, beautiful, and glorious, God himself being Judge. Now all these do believers receive by and from the Spirit of Christ, and consequently have by him their access to the Father, that is, are enabled unto, and carried on in the worship which God requireth at their hands.

1.) It is he who enables them to discover the mind of God, and his will concerning his worship, that they may embrace what he hath appointed, and refuse the thing, whereof he will say at the last day, *Who hath required this at your hands?* He is promised to *lead them into all truth*, as the Spirit of truth, *Joh. xvi. 13.* and is the blessed *unction* that teacheth them all things, *1 Joh. ii. 29.* all things for the glory of God, and their own consolation. It is he that speaks the word, which sounds in the ears, *This is the way, walk in it.* And when *Paul* prays for the guidance of the saints, he doth it by praying, That God would give them the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation* in Christ, *Eph. i. 17.* Now this he doth two ways.

(1. By causing them diligently to attend unto the word, the voice of Christ, for their direction, and to that only. This is the great work of the Spirit. So *Joh. xvi. 3.* it is said, *He shall not speak of himself, but what he shall hear*, that he shall speak; that is, he shall reveal and declare nothing but what is the mind of Christ manifested in the word; and that he shall call men to attend unto. *To the law and to the testimonies*, to the word, that is his constant voice: if men turn to any other teaching, they go out of the compass of his commission; that direction which the Father began from heaven, *This is my beloved Son, hear him.* He is the only master and teacher that the Spirit carries all believers unto; he still cries, hear him, attend unto him speaking in the word. It is true in point of practice according to the rule, for the remedying of scandals and disorders, we are commanded to *hear the Church*, or obey the wholesome directions of it, and to walk according to the Gospel: but as to the worship of God, both as to the matter and rules in the appointment of it, we are called continually by the Spirit, to hear Christ always; and that Spirit is not of Christ which sends us to any else.

(2. By revealing the mind of Christ unto us in the word: this is his work which he undertakes and performs. I confess, that notwithstanding the assistance that he is ready to give unto them, there are many mistakes, even amongst the saints themselves in their apprehensions in and about the worship of God: they are many times careless in attending to his directions; negligent in praying for his assistance; slight and overly in the use of the means by him appointed for the discovery of truths; regardless of dispossessioning their minds of prejudices and temptations, hindring them in the discovery of the mind of God: it is therefore no wonder they are left to be corrected under their own mistakes and miscarriages. But this hinders not, but that the Spirit may be said to give the knowledge of the worship of God in the word unto believers; and that because it is not, nor can be profitably and savingly attained any other way. As *no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Spirit*; so no man can know the way of God's house and worship, but by the Spirit: and we see by experience that those that despise his assistance, rather trust to themselves and other men for the worship of God, than to the word. This he does ordinarily in the use of means, at least so far, that though in some particulars there may be amongst them mistakes, yet not usually such, but that their performances are accepted of God in Christ. And in those things wherein they are at any time *otherwise minded* than according to truth, if they continue waiting, *that also shall be revealed* unto them from the word by the Spirit. The worship of God is not of man's finding out, but of his designation, who is *the wisdom of God*. It is not taught by human wisdom, nor is it attainable by human industry, but by the wisdom and revelation of the Spirit of God: it is every way divine and heavenly in its rise, in its discovery, and so becoming the greatness and holiness of God. For what doth please God, God himself is the sole Judge. If any thing else set up it self in competition with it, for beauty and glory, it will be found to be engag'd in a very unequal contest at the last day.

2.) Believers have this access by the Spirit, in as much as he enables them to approach unto God in a spiritual manner, *with grace in their hearts*, as he is the Spirit of grace and supplication. This is one special end for which the Spirit is promised unto believers, namely, that he may be in them *a Spirit of grace and supplication*, enabling them to draw nigh unto God in a gracious and acceptable manner, *Zeck. xii.*

10, 11. And this is one part of the work that he doth perform, when he is bestowed on them according to the promise, *Rom. viii. 26, 27.* Let men do their best and utmost, they know not so much as what they ought to pray for, but the Spirit of Christ alone enables them to the whole work. If all the men in the world should lay their heads together, to compose one prayer, for the use of any one saint, but for one day, they were not able to do it, so as that it should answer his wants and conditions; nor can any man do it for himself, without the help and assistance of the Spirit, whose proper work this is.

It were a long work to shew what the Holy Ghost, as a Spirit of grace in the hearts of believers doth, to this end, that they may have in their access unto God a saving, spiritual communion with him in Christ, wherein indeed consists the chiefest head of all the glory and beauty that is in the worship of God. Should I handle it, I must insist upon all these particulars:

(1. That the holy Spirit discovers their wants unto them, their state and condition, with all the spiritual concerns of their souls, with which, without his effectual working, no man can come to a saving acquaintance spiritually. Men may think it an easy thing to know what they want; but he that knows the difficulty of obedience, the deceitfulness of the heart, the wiles of Satan, the crafts and flights of indwelling sin, will not think so, but will grant that it is alone to be discovered by the Spirit of grace.

(2. It is he alone which really affecteth the heart and soul with their wants, when they are discovered unto us. We are of our selves dull and stupid in spiritual things: and when matters of the most inexpressible concernment are proposed, we can pass them by without being affected in any proportion to their weight and importance. The Holy Ghost deeply affects the heart with its spiritual concerns, works sorrow, fear, desire, answerable to the wants that are discerned, making *intercession with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered.*

(3. It is he alone that can reveal the saving relief and supplies that God hath provided in the promises of the Gospel for all the wants of the saints, so enabling them to make their supplications according to the mind of God. It is not the consideration of the letter of the promises that will discover savingly unto us the glorious relief that is provided in them for our wants; but it is revealed unto the saints effectually by the Spirit, as provided by the love of the Father, and purchased by the blood of the Son, and stored up for us in the covenant of grace, that we may make our requests for our portions according to the will of God.

(4. It is the Holy Ghost that works in believers faith, love, delight, fervency, watchfulness, perseverance, all those graces that give the soul communion with God in his worship, and in Christ renders their prayers effectual: he doth this radically, by begetting, creating, ingenerating them in the hearts of believers, in the first infusion of the new, spiritual, vital principle with which they are endued when they are born of him; as also by acting, exciting, and stirring them up in every duty of the worship of God that they are called unto, so enabling them to act according to the mind of God.

By these hath the soul spiritual communion with God in the duties of his worship: and these, with sundry other things, should be handled, if we aimed to set out the work of the Spirit in the worship of the Gospel, as he is a Spirit of grace and supplication. But the mentioning of them in general is sufficient for the end proposed, namely, to discover the beauty and glory of the worship that is thus carried on. Herein lies that, which all the beauty of the world fades before, and becomes as a thing of nought, which brings all the outward pomp of ceremonious worship into contempt: I mean the glory and excellency that lies in the spiritual communion of the soul with God, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, in that heavenly intercourse which is between God and his saints in their worship by this means. The Holy Ghost is essentially God himself, blessed for ever in his own person, he comes upon the hearts of the elect, and communicates of his own grace unto them; these graces he enables them to act, exert, and put forth in their worship of God. These God delights in, as coming from himself, as of his own workmanship in us; he seeth a return of himself to himself, of his grace to his glory; and by these do the saints approach into his presence, speak to him, treat with him, and hear from him: it is the language of faith and love alone, and the like graces of his Spirit that God hears in his worship; other voices, cries, and noises he regards not; yea, at least, if not some of them in themselves, yet all
of

of them when these are wanting, are an abomination unto him. However, this is the beauty and the glory of the worship of the Gospel, the beauty and glory that God sees in it. Where this work of the Spirit of God is in his worship, there faith, love, delight, and fervency are in a saving and spiritual manner exercis'd: he is an atheist, who will deny that they are acceptable to God; that this worship is glorious, beautiful, and comely: and he is no better, who thinks that any outward solemnity can render worship so, when these are wanting. So that they are the things on which the whole doth turn.

3.) As always from the foundation of the world, so in the New Testament, the solemn worship of God is to be perform'd in the assemblies of his saints and people. Now where the same worship is to be perform'd by many, the very law of nature and reason requireth that some one, or more, according as there is necessity, should go before the rest of the assembly in the worship which they have to perform, and be as the hand, or mouth, or eyes to the whole body, or assembly. And so also hath our Lord ordained, namely, that in all the publick and solemn worship of Gospel assemblies, there should be some appointed to go before them, in the performance of the duties of the worship that he requireth of them, be they what they will. Now as the things themselves, wherein these persons are to minister before the Lord in their assemblies, are all of them prescribed by God himself; so as to the manner of their performance. There are these two marks and guides to direct the whole: First, it must be so performed as to tend to the *glory* of God: and, secondly, to the *edification* of the assembly it self. It would be too long for me to shew you what is required to this one thing, that the worship of God be carried on in the assembly to the edification of the saints, which is, that all the ordinances of God may have their proper work in them, and effects towards them, for the encrease of their faith and graces, and carrying them on in their course of obedience and communion with God. The consideration of this work made the Apostle say, *πρὸς ταῦτα τὸ ἵνα ἡμεῖς*; In a word, so far as possible it may be done, their state and condition is to be spread before the Lord in prayer, according as they experience it in their own souls; their desires to be drawn forth and expressed, their pleas for mercy and grace to be managed with the like ends of prayer; their condition to be suited in instruction, consolation, and exhortation, and the like, in preaching the word; so of all other ordinances, they are to be managed and administred so as may best tend to the edification of the assembly. Now this is supposed by the *third* benefit that the saints receive by the Spirit, as to their approach unto God: he gives *gifts* and *abilities*, spiritual gifts unto them whom he calleth unto this work of going before the assemblies in the worship of God, that they may perform all things to the glory of God, and the edification of the body. I shall not so much as once mention the supplies that are invented and found out by men for this end and purpose. There is not a soul that hath the least communion with God, but knows their emptiness and utter insufficiency for that which they pretend unto.

Now that the Holy Ghost furnisheth men with gifts for this end and purpose, we have abundant testimonies in the Scripture; and, blessed be God, we have evidence of it abundantly in and from those who are endued with them, 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7, 8, 11. The design of the Apostle in that *chapter* is to treat of the worship of God, as it is to be carried on and performed in the Gospel assemblies of saints, of which he gives an instance in the Church of *Corinth*. For the right performance hereof, he lays down in the *first verse*, That *spiritual gifts* are bestowed: being to treat of the publick worship of God, he begins with spiritual gifts, whereby men are enabled thereunto. The author of all those gifts he informs us in the *fourth verse*, is the Holy Ghost; he is sent by Christ to this very end and purpose to bestow them on his Churches. The end of the collation, he informs us, is the profit and edification of the whole body, *verse 7*. Every one that receives them, doth it to this purpose, that he may use them to the good and benefit of the whole. To this end are they bestowed in great variety, as *verse 8*. That by them the use of the body may be supplied, and church edification may be carried on; and having thus shewed their nature, end, and distribution, he again asserts their author to be the Holy Ghost, *verse 11*. And we have direction, upon this foundation, given for the exercise and use of those gifts, in sundry places; as 1 *Pet.* iv. 10, 11.

This then also, as to the more solemn and publick worship of God, is perform'd by that Spirit in whom we have an access unto the Father: he gives spiritual gifts unto men, enabling them to perform it in an holy evangelical manner, so as God may be glorified, and the assemblies of the saints edified in the administration of all ordinances, according to what they are appointed unto. He enables men to pray so, as that the souls of the saints may be drawn forth thereby unto communion with God, according unto all their wants and desires: he enables them to preach or speak as the *oracles of God*, so as that the saints may receive instruction suitable to their condition, as to all the ends of the good word of God, whose dispensation is committed unto them: he enables men to administer the seals of the covenant so, that the faith of the saints may be excited and stired up to act and exert it self in a way suitable to the nature of each ordinance: and all those gifts are bestowed on men on purpose for the good and edification of others; they are never exercis'd in a due manner, but they have a farther reach and efficacy in and upon the souls of the saints, than he that is entrusted with them was able to take a prospect of: he little knows how many of his words and expressions are, in the infinite wisdom of the Holy Ghost, suited in an unspeakable variety to the conditions of his saints; here one, there another is wrought upon, affected, humbled, melted, lifted up, rejoiced by them, the Holy Ghost making them effectual to the ends for which he hath given out the gifts from whence they do proceed. I might mention sundry other advantages which we have, that belong to our access unto God by one Spirit: but because it were endless to enumerate all particulars, and they may be reduc'd to some one of these general heads, I shall mention no more of them. This then is the first evidence, that we have in the words, given unto the glory, beauty, and excellency of Gospel worship; in it we have an access unto the Father, *in the Spirit*, which relates unto the things before mention'd, or rather touched on. Here is order; the Spirit reveals the mind of God, as to the worship that is acceptable unto him: he furnishes the souls of the saints with all those graces whereby, and wherein they have communion with God in his worship: he gives gifts unto some, enabling them to go before the assemblies in the worship of God, according to his mind, and unto their edification. Blessed order, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against! Order, proceeding from the God of order, his own project and appointment. Here is beauty, decency, loveliness; it is all the work of the glorious and holy Spirit, which is like himself, holy, glorious, and beautiful; and to set up any thing of man's finding out in competition with it, is that which the Lord's soul abhors.

(2.) As the saints in the Gospel have access unto God *in the Spirit*, so they have all their access *in one Spirit*: and this is the spring of all the uniformity which God requires. So the Apostle tells us, that as to the gifts themselves, there are diversities of them, and difference in them, *1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6.* But whete then is uniformity? If one man have better and greater gifts than another, one man be more eminent in one kind, another in another, one excelling in prayer, another in prophesying, and preaching, what confusion must this needs breed? Where is then any uniformity in all this? The Apostle answereth, *ver. 11.* Here lies the uniformity of Gospel worship; that though the gifts bestowed on men for the publick performance of it be various, and there is great diversity among them, yet it is *one Spirit* that bestows them all among them, and that in the order before mention'd; *one and the same Spirit* discovers the will and worship of God to them all; one and the same Spirit works the same graces for their kind in the hearts of them all; one and the same Spirit bestows the gifts that are necessary for the carrying on of Gospel worship in the publick assemblies, to them who are called to that work: and what if he be pleased to give out his gifts in some variously, as to particulars, *dividing to every one severally, as he will*; yet this hindereth not, but that as to the saints mentioned, they all approach unto God by one Spirit, and so have uniformity in their worship throughout the world. This is a *catholick uniformity*; when whatever is invented by men under that name, reaches but to the next hedge, and, as might be easily prov'd and evinced, is the greatest principle of deformity and disorder in the world. This then is the uniformity of Gospel worship; all the saints every where have their access in it unto God in one Spirit, who worketh alike in the general in them all, though he gives out diversities of gifts, serving to the edification of the whole.

And these are the evidences that are directly and *in terminis* given to the proposition of the beauty, excellency, order, and uniformity of Gospel worship in the text; as

we consider it *absolutely* in it self. Before I come to consider its glory *comparatively*, in reference to the outward solemn worship of the temple of old, I shall add but one consideration more, which is necessary for the preventing of some objections, as well as for the farther clearing of the truth insisted on; and that is taken from the *Place* where spiritual worship is perform'd. Much of the beauty and glory of the old worship, according to carnal ordinances, consisted in the excellency of the place wherein it was perform'd: first, the tabernacle of *Moses*, then the temple of *Solomon*, of whose glory and beauty we shall speak afterwards. Answerable hereunto, do some imagine, there must be a beauty in the place where men assemble for Gospel worship; which they labour to paint and adorn accordingly. But they *err, not knowing the Scriptures*. There is nothing spoken of the place and seat of Gospel worship, but it is refered to one of these three heads, all which render it glorious.

1. It is performed in heaven; though they who perform it are on earth, yet they do it by faith in heaven. The Apostle saith, that believers in their worship do *enter into the holiest*, which he exhorts them to draw nigh unto, *Heb. x. 19, 21*. What is the *holiest* whereunto they enter with their worship? It is that whereunto Jesus Christ is entered as their forerunner, *Heb. vi. 20*. It is into heaven it self, *chap. ix. 24*. You will say, how can these things be, that men should enter into heaven while they are here below? I say, are men *masters in Israel* and ask this question? They who have an access unto the immediate presence of God, and to the throne of grace, enter into heaven it self. And this adds to the glory we treat of. What poor low thoughts have men of God and his ways, who think there lies an acceptable glory and beauty in a little paint and varnish? Heaven it self, the place of God's glorious residence, where he is attended with all his holy angels, is the state of this worship. Hence is that glorious description given of it, *Rev. iv. throughout*; where it is expressly said to be *in heaven*, tho' it is only the worship of the Church that is described. It were easy from hence to manifest the glory we have spoken of, in the several parts of it. But I do but point out the heads of things.

2. The second thing mentioned, in reference to the place of this worship, is the persons of the saints: these are said to be the *temple of the Lord*, *1 Cor. vi. 19*. Your *body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God*, *chap. iii. 16*. *Know you not, ver. 17. the temple of God is holy*. God hath now no material temple, but he hath chosen this spiritual one, the hearts and souls of his saints; and beautiful temples they are, being washed with the blood of Christ, beautified with the graces of the Spirit, adorned for communion with him: hence the king's daughter is said to be *all glorious within*, *Psal. xlv*. Whatever men may think, God that knoweth his own graces in the hearts of his, and in whose eyes nothing is beautiful or of price but grace, knows, and judges that this place of his worship, this temple that he hath chosen, is full of beauty and glory. Let who will be judge, that pretends to be a Christian, whether is more beautiful in the sight of God, *a living stone* adorned with all the graces of the Spirit, an heart full of the grace of Christ; or a dead stone cut out of the quarries, though graven into the similitude of a man.

3. The assemblies of the saints are spoken of as God's temple, and the seat and place of publick, solemn, Gospel worship, *Eph. ii. 21, 22*. Here are many living stones framed into *an holy house in the Lord, an habitation for God by his Spirit*. God dwells here: as he dwelt in the temple of old, by some outward carnal pledges of his presence; so in the assemblies of his saints, which are his habitation, he dwells unspeakably in a more glorious manner by his Spirit. Here, according to his promise, *is his habitation*. Now the saints assemblies, according to the order of the Gospel, are *a building fitly framed together*: as the tabernacle and temple were of old in their outward structure, whereby they were raised; so they in their spiritual union in and under Christ their head. And they are a temple, an holy temple, holy with the holiness of truth, as the Apostle speaks, *chap. iv. 24*. Not a typical, relative, but a real holiness, and such as the Lord's soul delighteth in. I know some can see no beauty in the assemblies of the saints, unless there be an outward beauty and splendor in the fabrick and building wherein they convene; but that is not at all the thing in question, what some men can see, or cannot see. Christ himself had unto some *no form nor comeliness that he should be desired*; no more have his saints, his ways, his worship. That is not it which we enquire after; but what is beautiful, comely, and of price in the eyes and judgment of God. Neither is that the matter in question, whether these or those

those are saints of God, or no? But only, whether an assembly of saints, as such, which are the temple of God, and being call'd together according to the order of the Gospel, be not a glorious seat of worship? God saith it is so; and if men say otherwise, those that are not enchanted with what I shall not name, will easily know what to give credit to.

Secondly, proceed we now in the next place to set forth the glory and beauty of this worship of the Gospel comparatively, with reference to the solemn, outward worship, which by God's own appointment was us'd under the Old Testament, which, as we shall shew, was far more excellent on many accounts than any thing of the like kind; that is, as to outward splendor and beauty, that was ever found out by men: and I shall do this the more willingly, because the Holy Ghost doth so much, and so frequently, and that not without many great and weighty Causes, insist upon it in the New Testament, having intimated it beforehand in many places of the Old. To the right understanding of what is Gospel, and deliver'd in Scripture on this account, some things are previously to be consider'd.

1. As the whole worship of the old Church, so the whole manner of it, with all its rites, ceremonies, and ornaments, both in the tabernacle and temple, were of God's own appointment. There was not the least part of the fabrick wherein his worship was celebrated, nor any ornament of it, nor one rite or ceremony that did attend it, but it was all of it wholly of God's own designation and command. This is known and confessed; *Moses made all things according to the pattern shewed him in the mount*: and at the finishing of the whole work, it is in one chapter ten times repeated, that he did as the Lord commanded him, *Exod. xl*. Now surely this gave it a beauty, order, and glory incomparably above whatever the wisest of the sons of men are able to invent. *Let the potsherd contend with the potsherd of the earth; but woe unto him that contends with his Maker*. The worship of the pope, and his invention, may possibly outdo the beauty and order of the worship of the turk and his invention; but I hope they will not compare with God, nor make themselves equal with him. But why should I say I hope it, when the contrary is evident? For doth he not undertake to assign new rules of his own in the worship of God? And doth he not therein make himself equal with God, whose prerogative it is, to be the only lawgiver to his peoples consciences, and the only prescriber of his own worship? But this I may yet hope, that men will not nakedly aver, that what is of their appointment, is equal unto, and comparable with what God appoints: take their institutions and God's together, and the former surely will have great disadvantage in respect of the authors. This, in general, I suppose will be granted, tho' men be very apt practically to *make void the commands of God by their traditions* and institutions, laying more weight upon some one of them, than on all the commands of Jesus Christ.

But, it may be, tho' God appointed that worship of old, and all the concernments of it, he intended not to make that beautiful and glorious, but plain and homely; so that it doth not follow that it is beautiful and excellent, because it was by him appointed. Answer, Though we may well and safely abide by this general proposition, that what God hath appointed in his own worship, is therefore beautiful and glorious, excellent, orderly, and comely, because he hath appointed it: yet I add,

2. That it was God's intendment to make, appoint, and dispose of all things so, that the solemnity of his worship might be very beautiful and glorious: he appoints the high priest's garments to be made expressly for glory and beauty, *Exod. xxviii. 3*. such as might be specious and goodly to look upon: and speaking of the Church state, when he had formed and fashioned it by his institution, he saith, *Her renown went forth among the heathen for beauty, for it was perfect through the comeliness he had put upon her*, *Ezek. xvi. 14*. There was in her ways of worship a renowned beauty, a perfect comeliness; whence, saith the prophet, *a glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary*, *Jer. xvii. 12*. But I shall not need to multiply testimonies to this purpose. Who knows not what things are spoken of the tabernacle, the temple and all the worship belonging to them, every where in the Scripture? As God appointed, so it came to pass; it was the most beautiful solemnity that ever the sun shone upon: mosaical worship, I say, as celebrated in *Solomon's temple*, outdid all the glory and splendor that ever the world in any place, in any age from the foundation of it, ever enjoy'd: should all the princes of Europe

lay their treasures together, they were not able to build a fabrick of that charge, magnificence, and glory, as was *Solomon's* temple. It were endless to go over particulars; the garments of the high priest were such as rendred him so awful and glorious, that *Alexander* the great, that famous conqueror of the *East*, fell down before him with a prostrate reverence; the order of the house, and all the worship in it, who can fix his mind upon it without admiration? How glorious was it when the house of *Solomon* stood in its greatest order and beauty, all overlaid with gold, thousands of priests and levites ministring in their orders with all the most solemn musical instruments that *David* found out, and the great congregation assembled of hundreds of thousands, all singing praises to God? Let any man, in his thoughts, a little compare the greatest, most solemn, pompous, and costly worship that any of the sons of men have in these latter days invented and brought into the Christian Church, with this of the judaical, and he shall quickly find, that it holds no proportion with it, that it is all a toy, a thing of nought in comparison of it. Take the cathedral of *Peter* in *Rome*; bring in the pope and all his cardinals in all their vestments, habiliments, and ornaments; fill their choir with the best singers they can get; set out and adorn their images and pictures to the utmost that their treasures and superstition will reach to, then compare it to *Solomon's* temple, and the worship thereof, and without the help of the consideration that the one was from heaven, the other is of men, the very nature of the things themselves will manifest how vain the present pretences are to glory and beauty. How much more may this be spoken of such underling pretenders, as some are?

These things being premised, we say now, that notwithstanding this whole worship, and all the concernments of it, was appointed by God himself; notwithstanding it was design'd by him to be beautiful and glorious, and that indeed it was the very top of what external beauty and splendor could reach unto; yet that it was no way comparable to the beauty and glory of this spiritual worship of the New Testament; yea, had no glory in comparison of it. This then I shall briefly demonstrate, (1.) In general; and then (2.) By an induction of some particular instances.

For the former I need go no farther than that place where the Apostle doth expressly handle this comparison, viz. 2 *Cor.* iii. 7, 8, 9, 10. He doth here on set purpose compare the ministration of the law in the letter with all its outward legal worship, rites, and ceremonies, with the administration of the Gospel in the Spirit, and the worship of God attending thereon. And first, he acknowledgeth that the old ministration was very glorious, which he either gives an instance of, or proves it by that of *Moses* his face shining when he came down from the mount, when he had received the law, and the pattern of all that worship which he was to appoint unto that Church. It seems, that God left that shining on the face of *Moses*; which was such, that the people could not bear the brightness of it, to testify how glorious that was about which he had received revelation: so that indeed, saith the Apostle, that ministration was glorious, very glorious, yea, *glory* in the abstract, *ver.* 9. nothing was there ever in the world to be compared with it: we will then compare it now with the ministration of the Spirit, and the worship of God under the Gospel. It may be he will say, it is not all out so glorious indeed: nay, but he goes farther, and tells us, that this doth so excel in glory, comeliness, and excellency, that in respect unto it, *the other had no glory* at all. What then may be said of any thing invented by men in the worship of God for glory and beauty? I dare not say what the Apostle saith of that which God himself appointed, that it hath any glory and beauty in it self; but yet suppose it hath so; let men esteem it as glorious and beautiful as they can possibly fancy it to be, yet unless the same veil be on their minds in reading the Gospel, which is *on the Jews in reading Moses*, they cannot but see and acknowledge, that it hath no glory in comparison of that spiritual worship which we have described.

Some particular instances will make the general comparison more evident. I shall only name these three, which being the principal spring of all the beauty, glory, and order of the worship of old, are peculiarly considered by the Apostle to this very purpose, in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, where he sets out the excellency of the evangelical administrations of the covenant and worship of God, above and beyond the legal.

1. The first of these was the temple, the seat of all the solemn outward worship of the old Church; the beauty and glory of it were in part spoken to before; nor shall I insist on any particular description of it; it may suffice, that it was the principal state of the beauty and order of the Judaical worship, and which rendered all exceeding glorious, so far, that the people idolized it, and put their trust in it, that upon the account of it they should be assuredly preserved notwithstanding their presumptuous sins: and indeed, it had such blessings and promises annexed unto it, that if there were at this day any place or house in the world that had the like, I should desire to be among the first that should enter into a pilgrimage of going to it, though it were as far beyond *Jerusalem*, as it is thither. But yet, notwithstanding all this, *Solomon* himself in his prayer at the dedication of that house, *1 Kings* viii. 27. seems to intimate, that there was some check upon his spirit, considering the unanswerableness of the house to the great majesty of God: it was an house *on the earth*, an house that he did build with his hands, intimating, that he look'd farther to a more glorious house than that. And what is it, if it be compared with the temple of Gospel worship? Whatever is call'd the temple now of the people of God, is as much beyond that of old, as spiritual things are beyond carnal, as heavenly beyond earthly, as eternal beyond temporal. First, in some sense the body of Christ is our temple, as himself called it, speaking of *the temple of his body*, as being prefigured by it, as having the *fulness of the Godhead dwelling* in him, typified by the presence of God in the old temple, and being the center wherein all his people meet with their worship of God, as those of old did in the temple. And surely there is no comparison for beauty and excellency between the house that *Solomon* built, and the Son of God, who *is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*. Again, the persons, and the assemblies of the saints, as I shewed before, are a temple to God under the Gospel. They are his body, *Eph. i. ult.* and his house, *Heb. iii. 6*. Not is the old temple, made of wood and stones, gold and silver, to be compared with this living house, washed with the blood of Christ, adorned with the real graces of the Spirit, and garnished with all the choice jewels of God's eternal love. They are God's delight, *the first fruits of the creature* to him, the spouse of Christ, through his graces altogether lovely. The Lord Jesus sees more beauty and glory in the weakest assemblies of his saints coming together in his name, and acted and guided in his worship and ways by his Spirit, than ever was in all the worship of *Solomon's* temple when it was in its glory. Thirdly, heaven it self, the holy place not made with hands, is also the saints temple under the Gospel. Believers have in their worship an open way into the holiest, made for them by Christ, who entered into it as the *forerunner*, *Heb. vi. 20*. opening it to them, also giving admission into it, *Chap. x. 19, 20, 21*. And how exceedingly doth this exalt the excellency of the spiritual worship of the Gospel? What was the glory of *Solomon's* temple, to the glory of the meanest star in heaven? How much less was it then in comparison of the glorious presence of God in the highest heavens, whither believers enter with all their worship, even where Christ sits at the right hand of God?

2. The second spring of the beauty of the old worship, which was indeed the hinge upon which the whole turned, was the priesthood of *Aaron*, with all the administrations committed to his charge. The pomp, state, and ceremonies that the papists have invented in their outward worship, or that heap which they have in several parcels borrowed of the heathen and Jews, is a toy in comparison of the magnificence of the Aaronical administrations. The High Priest under the Gospel is Christ alone. Now I shall spare the pains of comparing these together, partly because it will be by all confessed, that Christ is incomparably more excellent and glorious; and partly, because the Apostle on set purpose handles this comparison in sundry instances in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, where any one may run and read it, it being the main subject matter of that most excellent *Epistle*.

3. The order, glory, number, significancy of their sacrifices, was another part of their glory. And indeed, he that shall seriously consider, that one solemn anniversary sacrifice of expiation and atonement, which is instituted, *Lev. xvi.* will quickly see, that there was very much glory and solemnity in the outward ceremony of it. But now, saith the Apostle, *We have a better sacrifice*, *Heb. ix. 23*. We have him who is the High Priest, and altar, and sacrifice, all himself; of worth, value, glory,

beauty upon the account of his own person, the efficacy of his oblation, the real effect of it, more than the whole creation, if it might have been all offered up at one sacrifice. This is the standing sacrifice of the saints, offered *once for all*, as effectual now any day, as if offered every day; and other sacrifices, properly so called, they have none. I might mention other particulars; but I suppose, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have in some measure manifested the excellency, beauty, order, and uniformity of the spiritual worship of the Gospel, and that both *absolutely* in it self, and in *comparison* with any other way of worship whatever. From all which it will be easily made to appear, that this may well be reckoned among the unspeakable privileges that are purchased for us by the death of Christ, which was the thing first proposed to consideration.

S E R M O N III.

Of Walking with God.

MICAH vi. 8.

---And to walk humbly with thy God.

THE beginning of this *Chapter* contains a most patheticall expostulation of God, by the prophet, with his people, about their sins and unworthy walking before him. Having with an *apostrophe* to the mountains and hills, *ver.* 1, 2. stirred up their attention, and raised them to the consideration of his plea with them, in *ver.* 3, 4, 5. he emphatically presses them with the mercies he had of old bestowed upon them, with the patience and love toward them, which he shewed and exercised in his dealings with them.

The conviction being effectual to awaken them, and fill them with a sense of their horrible ingratitude and rebellions, *ver.* 6, 7. they begin to make enquiry, according as is the custom of persons under the power of conviction, what course they shall take to avoid the wrath of God, which they could not but acknowledge was due to them. And here, as God speaks, *Hof.* vii. 1. when he would heal them, their iniquity and wickedness is discovered more and more: they discover the wretched principles whereon they were acted in all that they had to do with God.

Indeed convictions, on what account soever made effectual upon the soul, draw out its inward principles, which are not otherwise to be discovered. Many there are, who have in notion received the doctrine of free justification by the blood of Christ, whom, while they are secure in their ways, without trouble or distress, it is impossible to persuade, that they do not live and act upon that principle, and walk before God in the strength of it. Let any great conviction from the word, or by any imminent or pressing danger, befall these men, then their hearts are laid open; then all their hopes is in their repentance, amendment of life, performance of duties in a better manner; and the iniquity of their self-righteousness is discovered.

Thus was it with these *Jews*; their sins being charged home upon them by the prophet, so that they are not able to stand under their weight and burden; he now discovers the bottom of all their principles in dealing with God, and that is this, that having provoked him, something they must do, whereby to appease him, and atone his anger.

In their contrivance to this purpose, they fix on two general heads. *First*, they propose things which God himself had appointed, *ver.* 5, 6. *Secondly*, things of their own finding out, which they supposed might have a farther and better efficacy to the end aimed at, than any thing appointed of God himself, *ver.* 6.

First,

First, they look to sacrifices and burnt offerings for help; they consider, whether by them, and on their account, they may not come before the Lord, and bow themselves before the high God; that is, perform such a worship, for which they may be acquitted from the guilt of their sins.

Sacrifices were a part of the worship of God, appointed by himself, and acceptable to him, when offered in faith according to his mind; yet we find God frequently rejecting them in the Old Testament, whilst yet their institution was in force, and themselves good in their kind. Now this rejection of them was not absolute, but with respect to somewhat that vitiated the service in them. Among these, two were most eminent:

1. When they were rested in, as the matter and cause of their justification and acceptation with God, beyond their typical virtue.

2. When they were relied on to countenance men in the neglect of moral duties, or to continue in any way of sin.

Both these evils attended this appeal of the *Jews* unto their sacrifices: they did it first to please God, or appease God, that on their account they might be freed from the guilt of sin, and be accepted: and then to countenance themselves in their immoralities and wickedness, as is evident from the prophet's reply, *ver. 7.* calling them from their vain confidence in sacrifices, to justice, judgment, mercy, and humble walking with God. But

Secondly, they find this will not do; conscience will not be satisfied, nor peace be obtained by any performance of these ordinary duties, though they should engage in them in an extraordinary manner; no, though they could bring thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil. Though men attempt never so vigorously, in never so extraordinary a manner, to quiet their souls, terrified with the guilt of sin, by any duties whatever, it will not do, the work will not be accomplished, therefore they will make farther attempts: if nothing that God hath appointed will reach the end they aim at, because they were never appointed by him for that end, they will invent or use some way of their own, that may appear to be of more efficacy than the other: *Shall I give my first-born for my transgression?*

The rise and occasion of such sacrifices as here are mentioned, the sacrificing of men, of mens sacrificing their own children; the use of such sacrifices, throughout the world, among all nations; the craft and cruelty of Satan in imposing them on poor, sinful, guilty creatures, with the advantages which he had so to do, I have elsewhere declared. For the present I shall only observe two things in the state and condition of convinced persons, when pressed with their sins, and a sense of the guilt of them, who are ignorant of the righteousness of God in Christ.

1. They have a better opinion of their own ways and endeavours, for the pleasing of God, and quieting their consciences, than of any thing of God's institution, or the way by him appointed for that end. This is the height that they rise too, when they have fixed on what is most glorious in their own eyes. Tell a Papist, who is convinced of sin, of the blood of Christ, it is folly to him. Penances, satisfaction, purgatory, intercession of the church in the mass, have much more desirableness in them: these *Eliabs* must wear the crown. The case is the same with innumerable poor souls at present, who hope to find more relief in their own duties and amendment of life, than in the blood of Christ, as to the appeasing of God, and obtaining of peace.

2. There is nothing so horrid, desperate, irksome, or wicked, that convinced persons will not engage to do under their pressure on the account of the guilt of sin; they will burn their children in the fire, whilst the cries of their conscience outcries the lamentation of their miserable infants: which, as it argues the desperate blindness that is in man by nature, choosing such abominations, rather than that way which is the wisdom of God; so also, the terrors that possess poor souls convinced of sin, that are unacquainted with the only remedy.

This being the state and condition of these poor creatures, the prophet discovers to them their mistake and desperate folly in the *verse* of my text.

Two things are contained in this *verse*: the *one* is implied; the *other* expressed in words.

First, here is something implied, and that is a reproof of the error and mistake of the *Jews*; they thought sacrifices were appointed for the appeasing of God by their

their performance of them; and that this was their business in their worship, by their duty in performance of them, to make satisfaction for the guilt of sin. This the prophet calls them from, telling them, that is not their business, their duty, God hath provided another way to make reconciliation and atonement; it is a thing above their power; their business is to walk with God in holiness; for the matter of atonement that lies on another hand: *He hath shewed thee, O man, what he requireth of thee*: he expects not satisfaction at thy hands, but obedience on the account of peace made.

Secondly, What is expressed is this, that God prefers moral worship, in the way of obedience, to all sacrifices whatever, according to the determination afterwards approved by our Saviour, *Mark xii. 33. What doth the Lord require of thee?*

Now this moral obedience he refers to three heads: *Doing justly; loving mercy; and walking humbly with God.*

How the *two first* are comprehensive of our whole duty, in respect of men, containing in them the sum and substance of the *second table*, I shall not stay to declare.

It is the *third head* that I have fixed on, which peculiarly regards the *first table*, and the moral duties thereof.

Concerning this I shall do these three things:

- I. I shall shew what it is to walk with God.
- II. What it is to walk humbly with God.
- III. Prove this proposition: Humble walking with God, as our God in covenant, is the great duty, and most valuable concernment of believers.

I. As to our walking with God, some things are required to it; and some things are required in it.

1. Some things are required to it. As

(1.) Peace and agreement. *Amos iii. 3. Can two walk together except they be agreed?* And he tells us, that walking with God, when there is no peace with him, is like walking in a forest, where, and when the lion roareth, *ver. 8*, when a man can have no thoughts but what are full of expectation of his immediately being torn asunder and devoured. So God threateneth to deal with them that pretend to walk with him, and yet are not at peace with him, *Psal. l. 22. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* Who are these? Those to whom he speaks, *ver. 16. But to the wicked, says God*: the exceptive, *but*, distinguishes them from those of whom he spoke before, *ver. 5*, who had made a covenant with him by sacrifice, and so obtained peace in the blood of Christ. When *Cain and Abel* went into the field together, and were not agreed, the issue was, that the one slew the other. When *Joram* met *Jehu* in the field, he cry'd, *Is it peace?* And finding by his answer, that they were not agreed, he instantly slew, and cried out for his life. *Agree, saith our Saviour, with thine adversary whilst thou art in the way*, lest the issue be sad to thee.

You know at what enmity God and man do stand, whilst he is in the state of nature. They are *alienated from God by wicked works; are enemies*, and their *carnal mind is enmity to him*, *Rom. viii. 7.* and *his wrath abideth on them*, *Joh. iii. 36.* they are *children of his wrath*, *Ephes. ii. 3.* Were I to pursue this head in particulars, I could manifest from the rise and first breath, from the consideration of the parties at variance, the various ways of managing of it, and its issue, that this is the saddest enmity that can possibly be apprehended. You know also, what our peace and agreement with God is, and whence it doth arise. *Christ is our peace*, *Eph. ii. 14.* *He hath made an end of the difference about sin*, *Dan. ix. 24.* *He hath made peace for us with God*, and by our interest in him, we, *who were afar off, are made nigh*, and obtain peace, *Rom. v. 1. Eph. ii. 14, 15.*

This then, I say, in the first place is required to our walking with God, that we are at peace with him, and agreement in the blood of Christ; that we are by faith actually interested in the atonement; that our persons are accepted, as the foundation of the acceptation of our duties. Without this, every attempt for walking with God in obedience, or the performance of any duties, is

[1.] Fruitless:

[1.] Fruitless: all that men do is lost. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination*; their holy things are dung, which God will remove. In all their duties they labour in the fire; not any of their works shall turn to their eternal account: God looks on all their duties as the gifts of enemies, that are selfish, deceitful, and of all things to be abhorred. Such men may have their reward in this life; but as to what they aim at, their pains are lost, their hearing is lost, their alms are lost; all is fruitless.

[2.] Presumptuous: they put themselves upon the company of God, who hates them, and is hated by them, *Psal. l. 16. But to the wicked, says God.* This is God's language to them in their duties, Thou bold presumptuous rebel, what hast thou to do to take my name in thy mouth? Why dost thou howl thus before me; and offer swines blood in my presence? How camest thou hither not having a wedding garment? I hate thy most solemn oblations. Indeed it will be found at the issue, that intolerable presumption lies at the bottom of all unregenerate mens attempts to walk with God. They count it a slight thing to do so: they deal with him as one that took very little notice how he is dealt withal.

This, I say, is the first thing required to our walking with God, that we be at peace and agreement with him, in the blood of Christ. And as the Psalmist says, *Consider this, ye that know not God*, who have not made a covenant with him, in and by the sacrifice of his Son. You meet him in the field, you put yourselves upon his company, you pretend to walk with him in these duties, and those other, which custom, education, conviction, or self-righteousness puts you upon; in every one of them you provoke him to his face to destroy you. You seem to flatter him, that you are agreed, when he declares that you are at enmity. Let a man deal thus with his ruler; conspire against his crown and dignity; attempt his death; despise his authority; reproach his reputation; and then when he is proclaim'd rebel and traitor, and condemn'd to die, let him come into his presence, as in former days, and deal with him as a good subject, offer him gifts and presents; shall he think to escape? Will he not be seized on, and delivered over to punishment?

Every man, in his natural estate, is a rebel against God: thou hast rejected his authority, conspired his ruin, the ruin of his kingdom, art proclaim'd by him a traitor and rebel, art sentenced to eternal death: is it for thee now to meet him, to go and flatter him with thy mouth, and fawn upon him in thy other duties? Will he not remember thy rebellions, despise thy offerings, command thee out of his presence into bonds and prison, abhor thy gifts. What canst thou else expect at his hands? This is the best and utmost of their condition in their obedience, who are not interested in Christ: and the more earnest and zealous you are, the more ready in the performance of duties, the more do you put yourselves on him, and his company, who hates you upon the justest grounds in the world, and is ready to destroy you.

(2.) The second previous thing, is, oneness of design. For persons occasionally to fall into the company of one another, and so to pass on together for a little season, doth not suffice for them to be said to walk together. Oneness of aim and design is required to it.

The aim of God, in general, is his own glory: he makes all things for himself, *Prov. xvi. 4. Rev. iv. 11.* in particular, as to the business of our walking with him, it is *the praise of his glorious grace*, *Eph. i. 6.*

Now, in this aim of God to exalt his glorious grace, two things are considerable: *First*, that all which is to be looked for at the hand of God, is upon the account of mere grace and mercy, *Tit. iii. 4, 5.* God aims at the exalting of his glory in this, that he may be known, believed, magnified, as a God pardoning iniquity and sin. And, *Secondly*, that the enjoyment of himself, in this way of mercy and grace, is that great reward of him, that walks with him. So God tells *Abraham*, when he calls him to walk before him, *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*, *Gen. xv. 1.* The enjoyment of God in covenant, and the good things therein freely promised and bestowed by him, is the exceeding great reward of them that walk with God. This also, then, is required of him that will walk with God, that he hath the same design in his so doing, as God hath; that he aims in all his obedience at the glory of God's grace, and the enjoyment of him as his exceeding great reward.

Now,

Now, according to what was before said of the design of God, this may be referred unto three heads.

[1.] In general: that the design of the person be the glory of God. *Whatever we do*, saith the Apostle, that is, in our worship of God, and walking with him, *let all be done to his glory*. Men, who in their obedience have base, low, unworthy ends, walk as contrary to God in their obedience, as in their sins. Some serve him for custom; some for an increase of corn, wine, or oil, or the satisfying of some low earthly end; some aim at self and reputation; all is lost: it is not walking with God, but warring against him.

[2.] To exalt the glory of God's grace. This is one part of the ministry of the Gospel, that in obedience we should seek to exalt the glory of grace. The first natural tendency of obedience, was to exalt the glory of God's justice. The new covenant hath put another end upon our obedience, it is to exalt free grace; grace given in Christ, enabling us to obey; grace accepting our obedience being unworthy; grace constituting this way of walking with God; and grace crowning its performance.

[3.] Aiming at the enjoyment of God, as our reward. And this cuts off the obedience of many from being a walking with God. They perform duties indeed; but what sincerity is there in their aims for the glory of God? Is it almost once taken into their thoughts? Is not the satisfaction of conscience, the escape of hell and wrath, the sole aim they have in their obedience? Is it of concernment to them that the glory of God be exalted? Do they care indeed what becomes of his name or ways, so they may be saved? Especially how little is the glory of his grace aimed at? Men are destroyed by a self-righteousness, and have nothing of a Gospel obedience in them. Look on the praying and preaching of some men; is it not evident that they walk not with God therein, seek not his glory, have no zeal for it, no care for his name; but rest in the discharge of the duty itself?

(3.) That a man may walk with another, it is required that he have a living principle in him to enable him thereunto. Dead men cannot walk; or if they do, acted by any thing but their own vital principle, and essential form, they are a terror to their companions, not a comfort in their communion. For a dead carcass, or a trunk to be moved up and down, is not walking. Hence this is every where laid down as the principle of our obedience, that we *who were dead are quickened*; that *the law of the spirit of life makes us free from the law of sin and death*, Rom. viii. 2. That we may walk with God, a principle of a new life is required; that we may have power for it, and be pressed to it from that which is within us. Had not a man rather walk alone, than to have a dead carcass taken out of a grave, and acted by an external force and power, to accompany him?

This, I say, is a third consideration. The matter of our walking with God, consists, as shall be shewed, in our obedience, in our performance of duties required. In this, we are all, more or less, engag'd; yea, so far, that perhaps it is hard to discover who walks fastest, and with most appearance of strength and vigour. But alas! How many dead souls have we walking amongst us?

[1.] Are there none who are utter strangers to a new spiritual life; a life from above, hid with Christ in God, a life of God; that mock almost at these things, at least that can give no account of any such life in them; that think it strange it should be required of them, that they should give any account of this life, or being begotten again by the spirit; yea, that make it a most ridiculous thing? What then is it they will yet plead for themselves? Why do they not walk with God? Is not their conversation good and blameless? Who can charge them with any thing? Do they not perform the duties required of them? But friend: Would it be acceptable to thee, to have a dead man taken out of his grave, and carried along with thee in thy way? All thy services, thy company is no other to God: he smells nothing but a noisome steam from thy presence with him: thy hearing, praying, duties, meditations, they are on this account all an abomination to him. Tell me not of thy conversation: if it be from a pure conscience, that is, a conscience purified in the blood of Christ, and faith unfeigned, which is the life, or a fruit of it, whereof we are speaking, it is glorious, and commendable; if from other principles, the Lord abhors it.

[2.] Are there none, who are acted in their obedience and duties, not from inward principles, and spiritualized faculties, but merely from outward considerations, and external impressions? The Apostle tells us, how believers *grow* and *go on to perfection*, Eph. iii. 16. Col. i. 19. Christ is the head; from him, by the Spirit, into every joint and sinew is derived an influence of life, that the body may thereby, and therewith, go on towards perfection. How is it with sundry others? They are set upon their feet by custom or conviction: one joint is supplied by repute, another by fear and shame, a third by self-righteousness, a fourth by the lash of conscience; and so they are driven on by a mere external impress. And these are the principles of the obedience of many. By such things as these are they acted in their walking with God. Do you suppose you shall be accepted? Or that peace will be your latter end? I fear many that hear me this day, may be in this condition. Pardon me if I am jealous with a godly jealousy: what means else that hatred of the power of godliness, that darkness in the mystery of the Gospel, that cursed formality, that enmity to the Spirit of God, that hatred of reformation, that is found amongst us?

Use. If there be so many things required to walking with God, to fit men for it; and many who do strive to walk with him, are yet lost from a defect of them in the midst of their obedience and performance of duties; what will become of them? Where shall they appear who never once attempted to walk with him; who are wrought upon by no considerations to make it their business so to do? I speak not only of those amongst us, young and old, whose pride, folly, idleness, debauchery, profaneness, hatred of the ways of God, testify to their faces, to all the world, to the shame and danger of the places wherein they live, that they are servants to sin, and walk contrary to God, who also will walk contrary to them, until they are no more. I speak not, I say, of such as these, who are judged of all: nor yet only of those who are kept to outward observances, merely on the account of the discipline of the place, and the hopes which they have laid up in it, for their outward good, with such other carnal aims: but of some also who ought to be leaders of others, and examples to that flock that is amongst us. What endeavours to walk with God are found upon them, or seen in their ways? Vanity, pride in themselves, families, and relations; yea, scoffing at religion and the ways of God, are the examples some give. I wish worldliness, selfishness, hardness, and straightness of bowels, with open vanity, do not eat up all humble walking with God, as to the power of it in others.

The vanity of the highest profession, without this humble walking, which is another deceit, shall be afterwards spoken unto.

For the present, let me speak to them of whom I have spoken somewhat already. If many shall cry, *Lord, Lord*, and not be heard; if *many shall strive to enter, and shall not*; what will be their lot and portion? Poor creatures! You know not the condition of your souls; you cry *peace*, and *sudden destruction is at hand*. Take heed, lest the multitude of sermons and exhortations you have, make you not like the men that dwell by the falls of mills, deaf with their continual noise. God sends his messengers sometimes to make men deaf, *Isa.* vi. 5, 7. If that be your portion it will be sad with you. Give me leave to ask you two or three questions, and I have done.

1. Do you not please your selves, some of you, in your ways, and that with contempt of others? Do you not think they are fools, or envious, or hypocrites, or factious, that reprove you; and scorn them in your hearts? Do you not rather love, honour, imitate, such as never pressed you, nor will, to this business of a new life, to walk with God, and so suppose the times ruined, since this new fangled preaching came up amongst you; desiring to hear things finely spoken, and fopperies of men ignorant of God and themselves? Or,

2. Do you not relieve your selves with the help of profligate souls, that you will be better, you will repent when the season is better suited for it, and your present condition is changed? Or,

3. Do not some of you labour to put far from you all thoughts of these things? *Amici, dum vivimus, vivamus*. It will be well enough with us, though we add drunkenness to thirst? Do not, I say, one, or all of these rotten, corrupted principles lye at the bottom of your loose walking with God? Take heed, I beseech you, lest the Lord tear you in pieces.

S E R M O N IV.

HAVING told you what things are previously required to our walking with God.

2. Our next enquiry is, as to the matter or thing it self: what it is to walk with God.

The expression it self is very frequent in Scripture, both as to the examples of them that did so, and as to precepts for others so to do.

It is said of *Enoch*, that he *walked with God*, Gen. v. 24. And *Noah walked with God*, Gen. vi. 9. *Hezekiah walked before God*, Isa. xxxviii. 3. *Abraham* is commanded to walk with God, Gen. xvii. 1. yea, and the same thing is almost an hundred times in the Scriptures, with some little variation, so expressed. Sometimes we are said to *walk with God*; sometimes to *walk before him*; sometimes to *follow after him*, to *follow hard after him*; sometimes to *walk in his ways*; all to the same purpose.

The expression you know is metaphorical; by an allusion taken from things natural, spiritual things are expressed therein.

Not to press the metaphor beyond its principal intention, nor to insist on all particulars, wherein any thing of allusion may be found, nor yet insist on the proof of that which is owned and acknowledged: *Walking with God in general, consisteth in the performance of that obedience, for matter and manner, which God, in the covenant of grace, requires at our hands.*

I shall only manifest unto you some few of the chief concernments of this obedience, which give life and significancy to the metaphor, and so pass on.

(1.) That our obedience be walking with God, it is required that we be in covenant with, and that the obedience be required in the tenor of that covenant.

This, as to the matter of it, was spoken to before, under the head of what was required to this walking with God; namely, that we have peace and agreement with him. Here it is formally considered, from that expression, *with God*, as the spring and rule of our obedience. Therefore this expression is comprehensive of the whole duty of the covenant on our part, as Gen. xvii. 1. *I am God Almighty*, or *All-sufficient*; that is, unto thee I will be so. As this is comprehensive of the whole of the covenant on the part of God, that he will be unto us, an all-sufficient God: so the words that follow are comprehensive of the whole of our duty, *Walk before me*; which are exegetically explained in the next words, *and be thou perfect*. The covenant, the agreement that is between God and us, in Christ, wherein he promises to be our God, and we give up our selves to be his people, is the bottom and spring of that obedience, which is walking with God; *i. e.* at an agreement with him, in covenant with him; with whom, out of covenant, we have no commerce.

(2.) It is an obedience according to the tenor of that covenant, wherein we are agreed with God. Walking with God according to the tenor of the covenant of works, was, *Do this and live*. The state is now changed. The rule now is that of Gen. xvii. 1. *Be thou perfect*, or *upright before me*, in all the obedience I require at thy hands.

Now there are sundry things required, to our walking with God in obedience, so that it may answer the tenor of the covenant wherein we are agreed.

[1.] That it proceed from faith in God, by Christ the Mediator. Faith in God, in general, is, and must be the principle of all obedience, in what covenant soever, Heb. xi. 6. But faith in God, through Christ the Mediator, is the principle of that obedience, which according to the tenor of the new covenant, is accepted. Hence it is called *the obedience of faith*, Rom. i. 5. *i. e.* of faith in God by Christ, as the foregoing

foregoing and following words evince. His blood is the blood of this covenant, *Heb.* ix. 15, and *chap.* x. 29. The covenant it self is confirmed and ratified thereby: and by the blood of that covenant, do we receive what we receive, from God, *Zech.* ix. 11. Hence, whenever God makes mention of the covenant to *Abraham*, and stirs him up to the obedience that is required in it, he still mentions *the seed*, i. e. *Christ*, saith the Apostle, *Gal.* iii. 6. As it is said in general, that *he that comes to God, must believe that he is*; so in particular, as to the new covenant, *Christ* says of himself, *I am the way*: there is no going to the Father but by him, *Joh.* xiv. 6. They who have believed in God, must be careful to maintain good works, *Tit.* iii. 8. i. e. they who have believed in God, through *Christ*. If in our obedience we walk with God, according to the tenor of the new covenant, that obedience ariseth from justifying faith; that is, faith in God, through *Christ*.

[2.] That it be perfect; that is, that the person be perfect or upright therein: *Walk before me and be thou perfect*, *Gen.* xvii. 1. It was said of *Noah*, that he was perfect in his generation, *Gen.* vi. 9. as it is also said of many others. *David* bids us mark the perfect man, *Psal.* xxxvii. 37. that is, the man that walketh with God, according to the tenor of the new covenant. And our Saviour calling for this obedience, commands us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, *Matth.* v. 28.

Now there is a twofold perfection.

1.) There is a *τελειωσις*, a consummation in righteousness. So it is said of the law, that it made nothing perfect, *Heb.* vii. 19, or brought nothing to perfect righteousness. And the sacrifices made not the comers unto God, by them perfect, *Heb.* x. 1. They could not *τελειῶσαι*, consummate the work of righteousness, which was aimed at. In this sense, we are said to be perfect, compleat in *Christ*, *Col.* ii. 10. and as it is said in another case, *Ezek.* xvi. 14. our beauty is perfect through his comeliness. This is the perfection of justification, whereof we speak not.

2.) There is a perfection within us. Now this also is twofold. A compleat perfection of enjoyment; and a perfection of tendency towards enjoyment.

(1. In respect of the first; *Paul* says he was not made perfect, *Phil.* iii. 12. and tells us where, and by whom it is obtained, *Heb.* xii. 23. *The spirits of just men made perfect*. Just men are not thus made perfect, until their spirits be brought into the presence of God. This perfection is the aim of *Christ's* redemption, *Eph.* v. 25, 26. and of all their obedience, *Eph.* iv. 14. But this is not the perfection which the covenant requires, but which it tends and brings to, whilst by the promise of it, we are carried on in the work of perfecting holiness in the fear of God, *2 Cor.* vii. 1. see *Job* ix. 20.

(2. There is also a perfection of tendency to this end. So *Noah* is said to be perfect, and *Job* perfect, and God commands *Abraham* to be perfect, and *David* describes the happy condition of the perfect man. Concerning this, observe,

1.] There is no word in the Scripture whereby this perfection, and being perfect, is expressed, that in its use is restrained to such an absolute perfection, as should admit of no mixture of failing or defect. The word used concerning *Noah*, and in the terms of the covenant to *Abraham*, is *תמים* of *תם* from *תם*, which hath various significations. When spoken in the abstract, as *תם* is often used, it signifies, *Simplicity of manners*, without craft, which, in the New Testament, is *ἀναξία*. So *Jacob* is said to be *איש תם* *Gen.* xxv. 27, which we have rendred, a plain man, that is, plain hearted, without guile, as *Christ* speaks of *Nathaniel*. Of this sense of the word, you have a notable example, *1 Kings* xxii. 34, where the man that slew *Ahab*, is said to draw a bow, *תם* in his simplicity, which we have rendred, at a venture, that is, without any pernicious design, in particular. So *Job* ix. 21, *תם* is opposed to *עש*, that is, to him that is *unquiet, malicious, and perverse*. Such a man in the New Testament, is said to be *ἀνυχαλῆτος* and *ἀμωμος*, that is, one that cannot be justly blamed, or reprov'd, for dealing perversely. Many other instances might be given. The word *יש*, which we have commonly rendred, upright, is used also to this purpose: but it is so known, that this word in its use in the Scripture, goes no farther than *Integrity*, nor reaches to an absolute perfection, that I shall not need to insist on it.

The words used in the New Testament are chiefly *τελος* and *ἀγλις* neither of which, in their use, is restrained to this perfection. Hence, *James* saith, he is *τελος* who bridles his tongue, *Jam.* iii. 2. The word is but once used positively of any

man in an indefinite sense, and that is, 1 Cor. ii. 6. where it evidently denotes, only men of some growth in the knowledge of the mystery of the Gospel. But I shall not farther pursue the words.

2.] Two things are contained in this perfection of obedience that is required in our walking with God in the new covenant. The first whereof regards our obedience; the second, the persons obeying.

[1. The perfection that respects the obedience it self, or our objective perfection, is that of parts, or the whole of the will and counsel of God, as to our obedience. The law or will of God, concerning our obedience, is perfect; it hath an integrity in it; and we must have respect to all the parts of it that are revealed to us. So *David*; *I have a respect unto all thy commandments*, Psal. cxix. See *Jam.* ii. 10.

[2. Subjective perfection, in respect of the person obeying, is his sincerity and freedom from guile, the uprightness of his heart in his obedience. And this is that which is mainly intended in that expression of *being perfect*; being upright, without guile, hypocrisy, false, or selfish ends, in singleness and simplicity of heart, doing the whole will of God.

This then, I say, is that perfection of obedience which makes it walking with God. Whatever comes short of this, if the heart be not upright, without guile, free from hypocrisy and self ends, if the obedience be not universal, it is not walking with God. This is a perfection in a tendency to that which is compleat; which *Paul* wished for the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. xiii. 9. and which he exhorted the *Hebrews* to, chap. vi. 3. if we fail in this, or come short of this perfection, by any guile of our hearts, by voluntary retaining any sweet morsel under our tongue, by keeping a knee for *Baal*, or a bow for *Rimmon*, we walk not with God. It is sad to think, how many lose all they do or have wrought by coming short in this perfection: one vile lust or other, love of the world, pride, ambition, idleness, hardheartedness, may lose all, spoil all; and men walk contrary to God, when they think they walk most with him.

(3.) That our obedience may be walking with God, it is required that it be a constant, progressive motion towards a mark before us. Walking is a constant progress. He that is walking towards a place that he hath in his eye, may stumble sometimes, yea, perhaps, and fall also; but yet, whilst his design and endeavour lies towards the place aimed at, whilst he lies not still when he falls, but gets up again and presses forward, he is still, from the chief aim of his acting, said to walk that way. But now, let this man sit down, or lye down in the way, you cannot say he is walking; much less can you say, that he is walking that way, if he walk quite contrary. So is it in that obedience which is walking with God: *I press forwards*, saith the Apostle, *to the mark*, Phil. iii. 14. *I follow after it*, Phil. iii. 12. And he bids us *so run that we may obtain*. There is a constant pressing forwards required in our obedience. Saith *David*, *I follow hard after God*. The enjoyment of God in Christ is the mark before us; our walking is a constant pressing towards it. To fall into, yea, perhaps, fall under a temptation, hinders not but that a man may still be said to be walking, tho' he makes no great speed, and tho' he defiles himself by his fall. It is not every omission of a duty, it is not every commission of sin that utterly cuts off in the performance of the duty: but to sit down and give over, to engage in a way, a course of sin; this is that which is called walking contrary to God, not with him.

(4.) Walking with God, is to walk always as under the eye of God. Hence it is called *walking before him*, before his face, in his sight. The performance of all duties of obedience, as under the eye of God, is required unto this walking with him.

Now there are two ways whereby a man may do all things as under the eye of God.

[1.] By a general apprehension of God's omniscience and presence, as *all things are open and naked before him*, Heb. iv. 12. on this consideration that he knows all things, that his understanding is infinite, that nothing can be hid from him, that there is no flying out of his presence, *Psal.* xiii. 7, nor hiding from him, the darkness being light to him. Men may have a general persuasion, that they are under the eye of God; and this is in the thoughts of all; I do not say actually, but in respect of the principle of it, that lyes in them, which, if it may freely act it self, will make them know it, and consider it, *Psal.* xciv. 9. *Job* xxiv. 23. *Prov.* xv. 3.

[2.] There is a performance of obedience under the eye of God as one that is peculiarly concern'd in that obedience. God says to *David*, *Psal. xxxii. 8. I will guide thee with mine eye.* The consideration of mine eye being upon thee, shall instruct thee, or teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. Mine eye is on thee as concerned in thy ways and obedience. This is to walk before God, to consider him as looking on us, as one deeply concerned in all our ways, walking, and obedience.

Now we consider the Lord as thus concerned, as one from whom we receive,
1.) Direction. 2.) Protection. 3.) Examination and trial.

1.) Direction: so before; *I will guide thee with mine eye.* Consideration of the eye of God on us, sends us to him for counsel and direction in the whole course of our obedience. If a child walk in any way with his father looking on him, if he be at a loss at any time which way he ought to go, will he not enquire of him who knows, who looks on him in all his ways? Are we at any loss in our way, know we not what to do, or how to steer our course? Look to him whose eye is upon us, and we shall have direction, *Prov. xxii. 12.*

2.) Protection in our walking in our obedience, *Psal. xxxiv. 15.* his eyes are so upon them, that his ears are open to them, to give them protection and deliverance: so fully *2 Chron. xvi. 9.* This is one end why the eyes of God are upon his and their ways, that he may shew himself strong in their behalf. I have seen it; he lays at the bottom of all their deliverance.

3.) For tryal and examination, *Psal. xi. 4, 5.* His eyes are upon us for to search and try if there be, as *David* speaks, any way of wickedness in us. This use he makes of the consideration of the omnipresence and omniscience of God, *Psal. cxxxix. 7, 8, unto 19.* Having set forth God's intimate knowledge of, and acquaintance with him, and all his ways, *ver. 23, 24,* he makes use of it, by appealing to him about his integrity in his obedience. So saith *Job* to God, *Hast thou eyes of flesh, or seest thou as man seeth?* chap. x. 4. that is, thou dost not. And what is this spoken in reference unto? Even his trying the paths and obedience of the sons of men, *ver. 6.* When our Saviour comes to try, examine, and search the obedience of his Churches, he is said to have *eyes of fire*, *Rev. i. 14.* and in pursuit of it he still tells his Churches, *I know thy works, or, I have not found thee perfect, I have something against thee;* all arguing a trial and examination of their obedience.

This, I say, is to walk before God, or under his eye; to consider him looking on us peculiarly, as one concern'd in our ways, walking, and obedience; that we may constantly take counsel of him, fly to him for protection, and consider that he weighs and tries all our ways and works, whether they are perfect according to the tenor of the covenant of grace.

Now there are two things that will certainly follow this consideration of our walking with God, being under his eye and controul.

(1. Reverential thoughts of him. This God who is a consuming fire, is nigh to us, his eyes are always on us: *Let us,* saith the Apostle, *have grace whereby we may serve him acceptably,* *Heb. xii. 28, 29.* If men order their deportment and carriage at least, unto a reverential appearance before their rulers or governours, who see only their outside; shall we not have a regard of him, who always hath his eye upon us, searches out hearts, and tries our reins, the most secret reserve of our souls? But of this afterward.

(2. Self-abasement under a sense of our great vileness, and the imperfection of all our services. But both these belong properly to the next consideration, of what it is to walk humbly with God.

(5.) Our walking with God in our obedience argues complacency and delight therein; and that we are bound unto God in his ways with the cords of love. He that goes unwillingly, by compulsion with another, when every step is wearisome and burdensome to him, and his whole heart desires to be discharged of his company, can very improperly be said to walk with him, and no farther, than as the mere motion of the body may be so express'd. The Lord walketh with us, and he rejoiceth over us, and in us, *Zeph. iii. 17.* as also he expresseth his delight in the particular service that we yield unto him, *Cant. ii. 14.* So also saith the Son and Wisdom of God, *Prov. viii. 31.* his joy and his delight is in the obedience of the sons of men. Hence are those longing expressions of God after the obedience of his

his people; *Oh, that there were such an heart in thee; that thou wouldst fear me! Turn you, turn you, when shall it once be!* What have you seen in me that you are gone away? And our Saviour, the husband of the Church, carries this to the greatest height imaginable, *Cant.* iv. 9, to 16. He speaks as one transported by a delight not to be borne, which he receives from the love and obedience of his Spouse; comparing it with things of the highest natural delight, and preferring them far before them.

Now surely if God hath this delight in us, in our walking before him; is it not expected that our delight should be in him in our obedience? It suits not my present business to go over the testimonies of Scripture, wherein either we are requir'd to delight in the Lord; or have the example of the saints, who did so to the height, proposed to us; or to insist on the nature of the delight I speak of. *Job* makes it a sure mark of an hypocrite, that he *will not*, notwithstanding all his obedience, *delight himself in the Almighty*, *Job.* xxvii. 10. Only take notice that there is a two-fold delight in this matter, [1.] A delight in the obedience it self, and the duties of it. [2.] A delight in God, in that obedience.

[1.] There may be a delight in the duties of obedience, upon some foreign respect, when there is no delight in God in them. A man may delight to go along with another in the way, on the account of some pleasantness in the way, or other occasions which he hath to draw him that way, tho' he hath no delight at all in the company of him with whom he walks. God tells us of an hypocritical people that sought him daily, and delighted to know his ways, and took delight in approaching to God, *Isa.* lviii. 2. And it is said of some, that *Ezekiel's* ministry was to them, as *a cheerful song of one that had a pleasant voice*; wherefore they came and heard, and attended on it, when their hearts went after their sins, *Ezek.* xxxiii. 31, 32. There may be something in the administration of the ordinances of God, in the person administering, in the things administred, which may take the minds of hypocrites so that they may run after them, and attend to them with great delight and greediness. *John* was *a burning and a shining light*, saith our Saviour to the wicked *Jews*, and they were willing for a season to rejoice or delight in his light, *John.* v. 35. How many have we seen running after sermons, pressing with the multitude, finding sweetness and contentment in the word, who yet have nothing but novelty, or the ability of the preacher, or some outward consideration for the bottom of their delight.

[2.] There is a delight in God in our obedience: *Delight thy self in the Lord*, saith the Psalmist, *Psal.* xxxvii. 4. And a delight in obedience and duties, because it is his will, and his ways; when a person aims in every duty to meet with God, to have converse with him, to communicate his soul to him, and to receive refreshment from him; when on this account, our duties and all our ways of obedience are sweet and pleasant to us, then do we in them walk with God. Let not men think, who perform duties with a bondage-frame of spirit, to whom they are weariness and burdensome, but that they dare not omit them, who never examine their hearts whether they meet with God in their duties, or have any delight in so doing; let them not think, I say, whatever they do, that at all they walk with God.

I shall not insist on more particulars.

Use 1. Of direction: know that it is a great thing to walk with God as we ought. We heard before how many things were required to render it acceptable; now, some of the things that it consists in. Who almost hath prepared his heart to walk with God as he ought? Who considers whether his walking be such as it ought to be? Believe me, friends, a formal performance of duties, in a course, or a round, from one day, one week to another, both in private and publick, may possibly come exceeding short of this walking with God. Men content themselves with a very slight and formal course: so they pray morning and evening; so they take part with some of the people of God, against open profane persons; so they keep themselves from such sins as would wound a natural conscience, all is well with them. Be not deceived, walking with God must have

(1.) All the strength and vigour of the soul laid out in it. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* The soul and heart of a man is to be in the work; his design and contrivance about it; his contending in it. Form, and a course will not do it.

(2.) It

(2.) It is to have the perfection of the new covenant in universality, and sincerity attending it: it is not the doing of this, or that thing, but the doing of all things by Christ commanded; not a loving of friends only, but of enemies; not a denial of the ways of ungodly men only, but a denial of self and the world; not a doing hurt to none only, but a doing good to all; not an hatred to evil mens ways only, but a love to their persons; not praying and hearing only, but giving alms, communicating, shewing mercy, exercising loving kindness in the earth; not a mortification of pride and vanity only, especially, if as to others in any outward appearance, but of envy, wrath, discontent. In a word, *It is perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord* that is required. If men professing religion, who are almost devoured by world, or flesh, or envy, or faction, or idleness, or uselessness in their generation, would but lay their hearts to the rules we have considered, they would find they had but little cause to hug themselves in their ways and walking.

I might here go over all the particulars that have been insisted on, and try our obedience by them. But,

Use 2. For others, I shall only ask over the heads of what have been deliver'd. Would you be thought to walk with God?

(1.) What evidence have you, that you are in covenant with him? That your covenant with hell and death is broken, and that you are taken into the bond of the covenant of grace? What account can you give to God, others, or your own souls of this your covenant state and condition? How many are at a loss as to this foundation of all, walking with God?

(2.) Is your obedience from faith? What evidence have you thereof? Go over all the causes, effects, and adjuncts of a justifying faith, and try whether you have this principle of all acceptable obedience? How hath it been wrought in you? What work of the spirit have you had upon you? What have been your conviction, humiliation, and conversion? When, how, by what means wrought? Are your hearts purify'd by it, and are you by it baptized into one spirit with the people of God; or are you still enemies to them?

(3.) Is your walking universal and perfect, according to the tenor of the covenant? Have you no sweet morsel under your tongue? No beloved lust that is indulged to, that you cannot as yet thoroughly part with? No allowed reserve for sin?

(4.) Do you delight in God in that obedience you yield; or are his ways a burden unto you, that you are scarce able to bear them? Weary of private prayer, of sabbaths, of all the worship of God? I leave these things with your consciences.

S E R M O N V.

WHAT it is to walk with God hath been declared. II. What is added thereunto of duty, in this qualification, comes nextly to be considered.

Amongst the many eminent qualifications of the obedience of believers, we shall find in the issue this to stand in the forefront among the chiefest. The words in the original are, *והִצַּנֵּת לְרֵגְלֶיךָ*: *to humble thyself in walking, or to walk with God.*

A man would think that it is such an honour and advancement, that a poor sinful creature should be taken into the company of the great God to walk with him; that he had need be exhorted to take upon him great thoughts of himself; that he may be prepared for it. Is it a light matter, says *David*, to be son in law to a king? Is it a light matter to walk with God? How had the heart of a man need to be lifted up, which hath such apprehensions of its condition? The matter is quite otherwise. He that would have his heart exalted up to God, must bring it down in its self. There is a pride in every man's heart by nature, lifting him up, and swelling him until he is too high and big for God to walk with.

Now

Now whereas there are two things in our walking with God, considerable: first, the inward power of it; and secondly, the outward privilege of it, in an orderly admittance to the duties of it: the former alone, is that which edifieth us in this duty; the latter puffeth up. These *Jews* here, and their successors the Pharisees, having the privilege of performing the outward duty of walking with God, were, as *Caper-naum*, lifted up unto heaven, and trusting in themselves that they were righteous, they despised others: of all men therefore they were most abhorred of God. This is that which the Holy Ghost beats them from, resting in the privilege, to come up to the power. God tells us of the prince of *Tyrus*, that he *set his heart as the heart of God*, Ezek. xxviii. 6. he would be on even terms with him; independent, the author of his own good, fearless. So in some measure is the heart of every man by nature; which indeed is not to be like God, but the Devil.

To prevent this evil, I shall enquire, what it is that is here required of us under these two heads,

1. What it is in reference whereunto we are to humble ourselves in walking with God.

2. How we are to do it.

1. There are two things that we are to humble ourselves unto in our walking with God. (1.) The law of his grace. (2.) The law of his providence.

(1.) In all our walking with God, we are to humble ourselves in bowing to the law and rule of his grace, which is the way that he hath revealed, wherein he will walk with sinners. The Apostle tells us of the *Jews* in sundry places, that they had a mind to walk with God; they had a *zeal for God*. So he had himself in his pharisaism, *Phil.* iii. 6. *He was zealous towards God*, Acts xxii. 3. and so were the *Jews*, *Rom.* x. 2. *I bear them record, they have a zeal of God*. And they followed after righteousness, *the law of righteousness*, *Rom.* ix. 31. They took pains to *establish their righteousness*, *Chap.* x. 3. What can be more required to walking with God, than a zeal for him; for his laws and ways, and a diligent endeavour to attain a righteousness before him? How few do we see attain thus much? What repute have they in the world that do so? But yet, saith the Apostle, they did not attain to walk with God, nor the righteousness they sought after, *Chap.* ix. 31. but what is the reason of it? Why, in their attempt to walk with God they did not bow themselves to the law of his grace; so *Chap.* x. 3. *They went about to establish their own righteousness, and did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God*. What righteousness is that? Why *the righteousness of faith*, according to the law of grace, *Rom.* i. 17. *They sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law*, *Chap.* ix. 32. And the ground of all this is discover'd, *ver.* 33. Behold, here are two effects of Christ towards several persons: some stumble at him, and so are not able to walk on with God. Who are they? He tells you, *ver.* 32. some are not ashamed: Who are they? They that believe, and so submit to the law of God's grace. It is evident then, that men may labour to walk with God, and yet stumble and fall, for want of this humbling themselves to the law of his grace.

Let us see then, how that may be done, and what is required thereunto. It is then required,

[1.] That the bottom of all a man's obedience lie in this, that in himself he is a lost undone creature, an object of wrath, and that whatever he have of God in any kind, he must have it in a way of mere mercy and grace. To this apprehension of himself, must proud man that would fain have something of his own, humble himself. God abhors every one that he sees coming towards him on any other account. Our Saviour Christ lets men know what they are, and what they must be, if they will come to God by him. *I came*, saith he, *to save that which was lost*, *Matth.* xviii. 11. *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, *Matth.* ix. 13. *ver.* 12. *The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I came into the world*, says he, *that they that are blind may see, and that they which see might be made blind*, *Joh.* ix. 39. This is the sum; if you intend to have any thing to do with God by me, know yourselves to be lost sinners, blind, sick, dead, so that whatever you have, you must have it in a way of mere grace.

And how was this direction followed by *Paul*? Will you see the foundation of his obedience? You have it, *1 Tim.* i. 13, 14, 15. *I was thus and thus, I am the chiefest of sinners; but I obtained mercy*. It is mere mercy and grace, upon the ac-

count

count whereof I have any thing from God; which principle he improves to the height, *Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9.* All loss, all dung, Christ is all in all. This the proud pharisees could not submit unto. It is the subject of much of their disputes with our Saviour. To be lost, blind, nothing, they could not endure to hear. Were they not children of *Abraham*? Did they not do so, and so? To tell them that they are lost and nothing, is but to speak out of envy. And on this rock do thousands split themselves in the days wherein we live. When they are overpower'd by any conviction, to an apprehension of a necessity of walking with God, as more or less, at one time or other, by one means or other, most men are; they then set themselves on the performance of the duties they have neglected, and of the obedience which they think acceptable, abiding in that course whilst their conviction abides; but never humbling themselves to this part of the law of God's grace, to be vile, miserable, lost, cursed, hopeless in themselves, never making thorow work of it. They lay the foundation of their obedience in a quagmire, whose bottom should have been digged into, and stumble at the stumbling stone, in their first attempt to walk with God.

Now there are two evils attending the mere performance of this duty, which utterly disappoint all mens attempts for walking with God.

1.) That men without it will go forth, somewhat, at least, in their own strength, to walk with God. Why, say the pharisees, can we do nothing? *Are we blind also?* Acting in the power of self, will cleave to such an one, so as not to be separated; it will steal upon him in every duty he goes about. Now nothing is more universally opposite to the whole nature of Gospel obedience, than this, that a man should perform the least of it in his own strength, without an actual influence of life and power from God in Christ: *Without me, says Christ, ye can do nothing, Joh. xv. 5.* All that is done without strength from him, is nothing. God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure, *Phil. ii. 13.* Whatever a man doth, which God works not in him, which he receives not strength for, from Christ, is all lost, all perishing. Now our fetching in of strength from Christ for every duty, is founded wholly in that subjection to the law of grace whereof we speak.

2.) His obedience will build him up in that state wherein he is, or edify him towards hell and destruction; of which more afterwards.

[2.] The second thing that we are to humble our selves unto in the law of grace, is, a firm persuasion, exerting it self effectually in all our obedience, that there is not a righteousness to be obtained before God by the performance of any duties or obedience of ours whatever. That this lyes in the law of the grace of God, the Apostle disputes at large, *Rom. iv. 13, 14, 15.* If saith he, righteousness be by the law, that is, by our obedience to God, according to the law, then faith and the promise serve to no purpose; there is an inconsistency between the law of grace, that is, of faith and the promise, and the obtaining of a righteousness before God by our obedience. So *Gal. ii. 21.* *If righteousness were by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.* You would walk with God according to his mind, you would please him in *Jesus Christ*: What do you do? You strive to perform the duties required at your hand, that on their account you may be accepted as righteous with God. I tell you, saith the Apostle, if this be the state of things, Christ is dead in vain: if this be a righteousness before God to be obtained by any thing you can do, the Gospel is to no purpose.

And this also is the proud heart of man to humble himself to, if he will walk with God. He must obey, he must perform duties, he must be holy, he must abstain from every sin, and that all under a quick, living, energetical persuasion, that by these things, a righteousness before God is not to be obtained. This is to influence all your duties, to steer you in your whole course of obedience, and to accompany you in every act of it. How few are influenced with this persuasion in their walking with God? Do not most men proceed on other practical principles? Is not their great reserve for their appearance before God, hewed out of their own obedience? God knows they walk not with him.

[3.] In the midst of all our obedience, which is our own, we must believe and accept of a righteousness which is not our own, nor at all wrought or procured by us; of which we have no assurance that there is any such thing, but by the faith we have in the promise of God; and thereupon renouncing all that is in or of our selves, we must merely and solely rest on that for righteousness and acceptance with

God. This the Apostle affirms his heart to be humbled unto, *Col. iii. 7, 8, 9*, the place before mentioned: he reckons up all his own duties, is encompassed with them, sees them lying in great abundance on every hand, every one of them offering its assistance, perhaps painting its face, and crying that it is gain; but, saith the Apostle, You are all loss and dung; I look for another righteousness than any you can give me.

Man sees and knows his own duty, his own righteousness and walking with God; he seeth what it costs and stands him in; he knows what pains he hath taken about it, what waiting, fasting, labouring, praying it hath cost him, how he hath cut himself short of his natural desires, and mortified his flesh in abstinence from sin. These are the things of a man, wrought in him, performed by him, and the spirit of a man knows them; and they will promise fair to the heart of a man, that hath been sincere in them, for any end and purpose that he shall use them. But now for the righteousness of Christ, that is without him, he seeth it not, experiences it not, the spirit that is within him knows nothing of it, he hath no acquaintance with it, but merely as it is revealed and proposed in the promises, wherein yet it is no where said to him in particular, that it is his, and was provided for him, but only that it is so to and for believers. Now for a man to cast away that which he hath seen, for that which he hath not seen, to refuse that which promises to give him a fair entertainment and supportment in the presence of God, and which he is sure is his own, and cannot be taken from him, for that which he must venture on, upon the word of promise against ten thousand doubts, and fears, and temptations, that it belongs not to him; this requires humbling of the soul before God: and this the heart of a man is not easily brought unto: every man must make a venture for his future state and condition. The question only is, upon what he shall venture it? Our own obedience is at hand, and promises fairly to give assistance and help: for a man therefore wholly to cast it aside upon the naked promise of God to receive him in Christ, is a thing that the heart of man must be humbled unto. There is nothing in a man that will not dispute against this captivity of it self: innumerable proud reasonings and imaginations are set up against it: and when the mind and discursive notional part of the soul is overpower'd with the truth, yet the practical principle of the will and the affections will exceedingly tumultuate against it. But this is the law of God's grace, which must be submitted unto, if we will walk with him. The most holy, wise, and zealous, who have yielded the most constant obedience unto God, whose good works, and godly conversation, have shone as lights in the world, must cast down all these crowns at the foot of Jesus, renounce all for him, and the righteousness that he hath wrought out for us. All must be sold for the pearl, all parted with for Christ. In the strictest course of exactest obedience in us, we are to look for a righteousness wholly without us.

[4.] We must humble our selves to place our obedience on a new foot of account, and yet to pursue it with no less diligence than if it stood upon the old. *Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10. By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of your selves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast: for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* If not of works, then what need of works any more? The first end appointed to our obedience, was, that we might be saved. This end, it seems, is taken away: our works and duties are excluded from any efficiency in compassing of that end: for if it be of works, then grace is no more grace, *Gal. ii. 21*. Then let us lay all works and obedience aside, and sin that grace may abound. That many did, that many do make this use of the grace of God, is most evident; so turning it into lasciviousness. But, saith the Apostle, there is more to be said about works than so: their legal end is changed, and the old foundation they stood upon is taken away; but there is a new constitution making them necessary; a new obligation, requiring them no less exactly of us, than the former did, before it was disannulled; so *ver. 10. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* God, saving us by grace, hath on that account, appointed that we should walk in obedience. There is this difference: before, I was to perform good works, because I was to be saved by them; now, because I am saved without them. God saving us in Christ by grace, hath appointed, that we shall perform that in a way of acknowledgment of our free salvation, which before we were to do to be saved.

Though works left no room at all for grace, yet grace leaves room for works, tho' not the same they had before grace came. This then are we to humble our selves to; to be as diligent in good works, and all duties of obedience, because we are saved without them, as we could be to be saved by them. He that walks with God, must humble his soul to place all his obedience on this foot of account. He hath saved us freely, only let our conversation be as becometh the Gospel. How this principle is effectual in believers, as to the crucifying of all sin, *Paul* declares, *Rom. vi. 14. Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* The argument to carnal reason would lye quite contrary. If we are not under the law, that is, the condemning power of the law, then let sin have its dominion, power, sway. Did not the law forbid sin under pain of damnation? *Cursed is every one that continueth not, &c.* Did not the law command obedience with the promise of salvation? *The man that doth the things of it, shall live therein.* If then the law be taken away from having power over us, to these ends and purposes, as to forbid sin with terror of damnation, and command obedience for righteousness and salvation; what need we perform the one, or avoid the other? Why, upon this account, saith the Apostle, that we are under grace, which, with new ends, and on new motives and considerations, requires the one, and forbids the other.

Have we now, or do we constantly humble our selves to this part of the law of God's grace; that we build up and establish our obedience, on grace, and not on the law; on motives of love, not fear; from what God hath done for us in Christ, rather than from what we expect, because eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord?

[5.] We are to humble our selves to this, that we address our selves to the performance of the greatest duties, being fully persuaded that we have no strength for the least. This is that which lyes so cross to flesh and blood, that our souls must be humbled to it, if ever we are brought to it, and yet without this, there is no walking with God. There are great and mighty duties to be performed in our walking with God in a way of Gospel obedience: there is cutting off right hands, plucking out right eyes, denying, yea, comparatively hating father, mother, and all relations, dying for Christ, laying down our lives for the brethren, crucifying the flesh, cutting short all earthly desires, keeping the body in subjection, bearing the cross, self-denial, and the like; which, when they come to be put in practice, will be found to be great and mighty duties. This is required in the law of grace, that we undertake, and go through with these all our days, with a full assurance and persuasion, that we have not strength of our selves, or in our selves, to perform the least of them. *We are not sufficient of our selves,* saith the Apostle, *2 Cor. iii. 5.* We cannot think a good thought: *Without Christ we can do nothing,* *Joh. xv. 5.* This to a carnal heart, looks like making of brick without straw. A hard saying it is, *who can bear it?* May not men sit down, and say, *Why doth he yet complain?* Is he not austere, reaping where he hath not sown? *Are his ways equal?* Yea, most equal, righteous, and gracious? For this is the design of his thus dealing with us, that upon our addressing our selves to any duty, we should look to him from whom are all our supplies, and thereby receive strength for what we have to do. How unable was *Peter* to walk upon the water? Yet when Christ bids him come, he ventures in the midst of the sea, and with the command hath strength communicated to support him. God may call us to do or suffer what he pleases, so that his call have an efficacy with it to communicate strength for the performance of what he calls us to, *Phil. i. 29.*

This, I say, are we to humble our selves unto; not only in the general, to reckon that the duties that are required of us, are not proportioned to the strength residing in us, but to the supply laid up for us in Christ; but also to lye under such an actual conclusion in every particular duty that we address our selves to. This, in civil and natural things, were the greatest madness in the world: nor is it needful that you should add any farther discouragement to a man from attempting any thing, than to convince him that he hath no strength or ability to perform, or go through with it: once persuade him of that, and there is an end of all endeavours; for who will wear out himself about that which it is impossible he should attain? It is otherwise in spirituals; God may require any thing of us, that there is strength laid up in Christ for, enough to enable us to perform it: and we may by faith attempt any

duty, tho' never so great, if there be grace to be obtained for it from Christ. Hence is that enumeration of the great things done by believers, through faith, utterly beyond their own strength and power, Heb. xi. 33, 34. *Out of weakness were made strong.* When they entered upon the duty they were weakness it self, but in the performance of it grew strong, by the supply that was administered. So we are said to come to Christ to *find grace to help in time of need*, Heb. iv. 16. when we need it, as going about that which we have no might nor power for.

This is the way to walk with God, to be ready and willing to undergo any duty, tho' never so much above or beyond our strength, so we can see that in Christ there is a supply. The truth is, he that shall consider what God requires of believers, would think them to have a stock of spiritual strength, like that of *Samson's*; since they are to fight with principalities and powers, contend against the world, and self, and what not; and he that shall look upon them, will quickly see their weakness and inability. Here lies the mystery of it; the duties required of them are proportioned to the grace laid up for them in Christ, not to what they are at any time themselves intrusted withal.

[6.] This also is another thing we are to humble our selves unto; to be contented to have the sharpest afflictions accompanying and attending the strictest obedience. Men walking closely with God, may perhaps have some secret reserves for freedom from trouble in this life: hence they are apt to think strange of a fiery trial, 1 *Pet.* iv. 12. and therefore when it comes upon them, they are troubled, perplexed, and know not what it means, especially if they see others prospering, and at rest in the land, who know not God. Their estates are ruined, names blasted, bodies afflicted with violent diseases, children taken away, or turning profligate and rebellious, life in danger every hour, perhaps killed all the day long: hereupon they are ready to cry with *Hezekiah*, Isa. xxxviii. 3. *Lord, remember*; or to contend about the business, as *Job* did, being troubled that he was disappointed in his expectation of dying in his nest. But this frame is utterly contrary to the law of the grace of God, which is, that the children that he receives are to be chastized, Heb. xii. 5. that they are to undergo whatever chastening he will call them to: for having made the captain of their salvation perfect through all manner of sufferings, he will make his conformable to him. This, I say, is part of the law of the grace of God, that in the choicest obedience we willingly undergo the greatest afflictions. The management of this principle between God and *Job*, were worth while to consider; for altho' he disputed long, yet God left him not until he brought him to own it, and to submit unto it with all his heart. This will farther appear in our second head, about submitting to the law of the providence of God. The truth is, to help our poor weak hearts in this business, to prevent all sinful repinings, disputes, and the like, he hath laid in such provision of principles, as may render the receiving of it, sweet and easy to us. As

1.) That he doth not correct us for his pleasure, but that he may make us partakers of his holiness: so that we are not in heaviness unless it be needful for us; which we may rest upon, when we neither see the cause, nor the particular of our visitation; then on this account may we rest on his sovereign will and wisdom.

2.) That he will make all things work together for our good. This takes the poison out of every cup we are to drink, yea, all the bitterness of it. We have concerns that lye above all that here we can undergo or suffer; and if all work for our advantage and improvement, why should they not be welcome to us?

3.) That conformity and likeness to Jesus Christ is hereby to be attained: and sundry other principles there are given out, to prevail with our hearts to submit and humble our souls to this part of the law of God's grace, which is a thing that the devil never thought *Job* would have done, and was therefore restless until it was put to the trial: but he was disappointed and conquered, and his condemnation aggravated.

And this is the *first* thing required of us, namely, that we humble our selves to the law of the grace of God.

Use 1. Let us now take some brief account of our selves, whether we do so or no. We perform duties, and so seem to walk with God; but

(1.) Is the bottom of our obedience, a deep apprehension, and a full conviction of our own vileness and nothingness, of our being the chief of sinners, lost and undone,

undone, so that we always lye at the foot of sovereign grace and mercy? Is it so? Then when, how, by what means was this apprehension brought upon us? I intend not a general notion that we are sinners; but a particular apprehension of our lost undone condition, with suitable affections thereunto. Do we cry to the Lord out of the depths? Or is the end of our obedience to keep our selves out of such a condition? I am afraid many amongst us, could we, or themselves, by any means dive into the depths of their hearts, would be found to yield their obedience unto God, merely on the account of keeping them out of the condition which they must be brought unto, before they can yield any acceptable obedience to him. If we think at all to walk with God, let us be clear in this, that such a sense and apprehension of our selves lyes at the bottom of it: *Of sinners I am chief.*

(2.) Doth this always abide in our thoughts, and upon our spirits, that by all we have done, do, or can do, we cannot obtain righteousness to stand in the presence of God, so that in the secret reserve of our hearts, we place none of our righteousness on that account? Can we be content to suffer loss in all our obedience, as to an end of righteousness; and do we appear before God, simply on another head, as if there were no such thing as our own obedience in the world? Herein indeed lyes the great mystery of Gospel obedience, that we pursue it with all our strength and might, with all the vigour of our souls, and labour to abound in it like the angels in theirs, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord; and yet in point of the acceptation of our persons, to have no more regard unto it, than if we had yielded no more obedience than the thief on the cross.

(3.) Do we then humble our selves to accept of the righteousness that God in Christ hath provided for us? It is a common working of the heart of them whom God is drawing to himself; they dare not close with the promise, they dare not accept of Christ and his righteousness, it would be presumption in them. And the answer is common, that indeed this is not fear and humility, but pride. Men know not how to humble themselves to a righteousness purely without them, on the testimony of God; the heart is not willing to it: we would willingly establish our own righteousness, and not submit to the righteousness of God. But how is it with our souls? Are we clear in this great point, or no? If we are not, we are at best shuffling with God; we walk not with him. He admits none into his company, but expressly on the terms of taking this righteousness that he hath provided: and his soul loaths them that would tender him any thing in the room thereof, as men engaged to set up their wisdom and righteousness against his. But I must conclude.

Use 2. If all these things are required to our walking with God, where shall they appear, what shall be their lot and portion, who take no thought about these things? Some we see visibly to walk contrary to him, having no regard to him at all, nor considering their latter end. Others have some checks of conscience, that think to cure these distempers and eruptions of sin, with a loose cry, of, God be merciful to them. Some go a little farther, to take care of the performance of duties, but they seek not God in a due manner; and he will make a breach upon them. The Lord awakes them all before it be too late.

S E R M O N VI.

WHAT it is to humble our selves to the law of God's grace, you have heard.

(2.) I come now to shew, what it is to humble our selves to the law of his providence.

By the law of providence, I intend, God's sovereign disposal of all the concernments of men in this world, in the variety, order, and manner which he pleaseth, according to the rule and infinite reason of his own goodness, wisdom, righteousness, and truth.

[1.] To

[1.] To evince what it is to humble our selves to this law, some general observations must be given. And,

1.) There is, and ever was somewhat, very much, in God's providential administration of the things of this world, and the concernments of the sons of men therein, which the most improved reason of men cannot reach unto, and which is contrary to all that is in us, as merely men; of judgment, affections, or what else soever we are acted by.

Thy judgments, saith David unto God, are far above out of his sight, Psal. x. 5; that is, of the man he is speaking of; he is not able to see the ground and reason, the order and beauty of them. And Psal. xxxvi. 6. *Thy righteousness is like a great mountain, and thy judgments are a great deep*; that is, as the sea which none can look into the bottom of, nor know what is done in the caverns thereof. So that there is an height in the judgments of God not to be measured, and a depth not to be fathomed. Men cannot look into his ways. So also Psal. lxxvii. 19. *Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known*. Men must be content to stand at the shore, and admire at the works of God; but as to the beauty and excellency of them, they cannot search them out. To this purpose discourseth Zophar, in Job xi. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. It is of the excellency and perfection of God in his works of providence that he is speaking; in the consideration of whose unsearchableness, he closes with that of ver. 12. Vain man would know the secrets of the counsels of God, the reason of his ways; but in his attempts after it, he is as an ass, as a wild ass, as the colt of a wild ass; than which, nothing could be spoken with more contempt, to abase the pride of a poor creature.

The ways of God, are, we know, all perfect: he is our rock, and his work is perfect: nothing can be added to them, nor taken from them; yea, they are all comely and beautiful in their season: there is not any thing comes out from him, but it is from wonderful counsel; and all his ways will at length be found to praise him: but as Job speaks, ix. 11, we perceive it not, we take no notice of it. *For who hath known his mind, or been his counsellor?* Rom. xi. 33, 34.

Hence, not only the heathen were entangled in the consideration of the works of providence; some, upon it, turning Atheists, most ascribing all things to blind, uncertain *chance* and *contingency*; and others, very few, labouring to set a lustre upon what they could not understand: but we have the people of God themselves disputing with him about the equality of his ways, bringing arguments against it, and contending against his wisdom in them. *Ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal*, Ezek. xviii. 25. And again are they at it, xxxiii. 20. *Yet ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal*. Yea, not only the common people, but the choicest of God's servants under the Old Testament, were exceedingly exercised with this, that they could not oftentimes see the beauty and excellency, nor understand the reason or order of God's dispensations: which I might prove at large, in the instances of Job, David, Heman, Jeremy, Habakkuk, and others. Yea, there was nothing that God was more put to in dealing with his people of old, than to justify the righteousness and perfections of his providential dispensations, against their unjust, unbelieving complaints and manners.

This then being the condition of God's providential dispensations in general, that there is much in them, not only above us, and unsearchable to us, as to the reason and beauty of his ways, but also contrary to all that is in us of reason, judgment, or affections, there is surely need of humbling our souls to the law of this providence, if we intend to walk with him. Neither is there any other way to come to an agreement with him, or to quiet our hearts from repining.

2.) There are four things in God's providential disposing of the things and concernments of men in the world, that require this humbling of our selves to him, as being no way able to grapple with them. (1. Visible confusion. (2. Unspeakable variety. (3. Sudden alterations. (4. Deep distresses.

(1. Visible confusion, like that mentioned, Isa. viii. 22. He that takes a view of the general state of things in the world, will see nothing but trouble, darkness, and anguish; yea, darkness cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. The oppression of tyrants, wasting of nations, destruction of men and beasts, fury and desolations make up the things of the past and present ages. The greatest and choicest parts of the earth, in the mean time inhabited by them that know not God, that hate

hate him, that fill and replenish the world with habitations of cruelty, sporting themselves in mischief, like the leviathan in the sea. In respect hereof God is said to make darkness his secret place and his pavilion, *Psal.* xviii. 11. and to dwell in the thick darkness, 2 *Chron.* vi. 1. and to wait for the issue of this dispensation; to humble themselves to the law of it, is the patience and wisdom of the saints. See *Hab.* ii. 1.

(2. Unspeakable variety. Not to insist on particulars; the case of the saints throughout the world, is the only instance I shall mention, and that on a twofold account.

1.] Compared among themselves, in what unspeakable variety are they dealt withal? Some under persecution always, some always at peace, some in dungeons and prisons, some at liberty in their own houses: the saints of one nation under great oppression for many ages, of another in quietness: in the same places some poor, in great distress, put hard to it for daily bread all their lives; others abounding in all things; some full of various afflictions, going softly and mourning all their days; others spared and scarce touched with the rod at all: and yet commonly the advantage of holiness, and close walking with God, lying on the distressed side. How doth God deal also with families in respect of grace, while he takes one whole family into covenant, and leaves out another whole family, whose heads and springs are no less holy? He comes into an house, and takes one, and leaves another, takes a despised outcast, and leaves a darling. Of them also, some are wise, endowed with great gifts and abilities; others weak to contempt and reproach. Who can now with an eye of reason look upon them, and say, they are all the children of one father, and that he loves them all alike? Should you come into a great house, and see some children in scarlet, having all things needful, others hewing wood, and drawing water; you would conclude that they are not all children, but some children, some slaves: but when it shall be told you, that they are all one man's children, and that the hewers of wood that live on the bread and water of affliction, and go in tattered rags, are as dear to him as the other, and that he intends to leave them as good an inheritance, as any of the rest; if you intend not to question the wisdom and goodness of the father of the family, you must resolve to submit to his authority with a quiet subjection of mind. So is it in the great family of God; nothing will quiet our souls, but humbling our selves to the law of his providence.

2.] Comparing them with others was the hard case of old; the pleading whereof, by *Job*, *David*, *Jeremy*, and *Habbakuk*, is so known, that I shall not need farther to insist upon it.

I shall not farther manifest this from the variety which is in the dispensations of God towards the men of the world, which the wisest of men can reduce to no rule of righteousness, as things pass among us. *Solomon* acquaints us with it, *Eccles.* ix. 11. Things are disposed of according to no rule that we may fix our expectations on: which ruin'd the reason of that mirror of mankind in a natural condition, *Marcus Brutus*, and made him cry out, *ὦ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀρετή*.

(3. Sudden alterations. As in the case of *Job*, God takes a man whom he hath blessed with choice of blessings, in the midst of a course of obedience and close walking with himself, when he expected to die in his nest, and to see good all his days; ruins him in a moment; blasts his name, that he who was esteemed a choice saint, shall not be able to deliver himself from the common esteem of an hypocrite; slays his children; takes away his rest, health, and every thing that is desirable to him. This amazes the soul, it knows not what God is doing, nor why he pleads with it in so much bitterness. A man that either is, or may fall into such a condition, will find, that he will never be able to walk with God in it, without humbling himself to the law of his providence.

(4. Great, deep, and abiding distresses have the same effects with sudden alterations: of which more afterwards.

And these are in general some of the things in God's providential disposal of the things of men in this world, that are too hard and wonderful for flesh and blood, wherein his paths are in the deep, which are contrary to all rules of procedure that he hath given us to judge by, who are to judge of things but once, he being to call all things to a second account.

[2.] Having

[2.] Having given these two observations, I return to what I first proposed, namely, the duty of humbling our selves to the law of the providence of God, so far as it concerns us in particular.

I do not intend merely that men in general should be content with the dealings of God in the world, but that we should humble our hearts to him in what falls to be our share therein, tho' it come under any one or more of the heads of difficulty before mentioned. Our lots are various in this world: how they may be farther different before they go out of it, we know not. Some are in one condition, some in another; that we envy not one another, nor any in the world, that we repine not at God, nor charge him foolishly, is that I aim at. A thing sufficiently necessary in these days, wherein good men are too little able to bear their own condition, if in any thing it differs from others.

The next thing then is to consider, how, and wherein we are to humble our selves to the law of the providence of God. There are things on this account which our souls are to be humbled unto.

1.) His sovereignty. May he not do what he will with his own? This is so argued out in *Job*, that I shall need to go no farther for the confirmation of it. See *chap.* xxxiii. 8, 9, 10, 11. The words are the sum of what was, or was apprehended to be the complaint of *Job*; that in the midst of his innocency and course of obedience, God dealt hardly with him, and brought him into great distresses. What is the reply hereunto? *ver.* 12. *Behold in this thou art not just.* It is a most unequal thing, for any man to make any such complaints. Whether *Job* did so or not, may be disputed; but for any one to do so is certainly most unjust. But on what ground is that asserted? See the words following; *God is greater than man, why striveest thou with him?* It is to no purpose to contend with him, that is mightier than thou. And it is likewise unjust to do it with him, who is infinitely and incomparably so upon the account of his absolute dominion and sovereignty. For, saith he, *He giveth no account of his matters.* He disposeth of all things as he will, and as he pleaseth. This is pursued to the utmost, *chap.* xxxiv. 18, 19. Men will not be forward openly to revile or repine against their governors. And what shall be said of God, who is infinitely exalted above them? Hence you have the conclusion of the whole matter, *ver.* 31, 32, 33.

This, I say, is the first thing that we are to humble our selves unto. Let us lay our mouths in the dust, and our selves on the ground, and say, It is the Lord, I will be silent because he hath done it: he is of one mind, and who can turn him? He doth whatever he pleaseth. Am not I in his hand, as clay in the hand of the potter? May he not make what kind of vessel he pleases? When I was not, he brought me out of nothing by his word. What I am or have is merely of his pleasure. Oh, let my heart and thoughts be full of deep subjection to his supreme dominion, and uncontrollable sovereignty over me. This quieted *Aaron* in his great distress, and *David* in his, 2 *Sam.* xv. 25, 26. and *Job* in his. 'Tis pleaded by the Lord, *Jer.* x. *Rom.* ix. 11. and innumerable other places. If we intend to walk with God we must humble our selves to this, and therein we shall find rest.

2.) His wisdom. He is wise also, as he speaks in derision of mens pretending to be so. Indeed God is only wise: now he hath undertaken to make all things work together for good to them that love him, *Rom.* viii. 28. That we shall not be in heaviness unless it be needful, 1 *Pet.* i. 6. In many dispensations of his providence we are at a loss; we cannot measure them by that rule. We see not how this state or condition can be good for the Church in general, or us in particular. We suppose it would be more for his glory, and our advantage, if things were otherwise disposed. Innumerable are the reasonings of the hearts of the sons of men, on this account; we know not the thoughts of our own souls herein, how vile they are. God will have us humble ourselves to his wisdom in all his dispensations; and to captivate our understandings thereunto. So *Isa.* xl. 27, 28. This is that which our hearts are to rest in, when ready to repine. There is no end of his understanding; he sees all things, in all their causes, effects, circumstances, in their utmost reach, tendency and correspondency. We walk in a shade, and know nothing of what is before us: the day will come when we shall see one thing set against another, and infinite wisdom shining out in them all; that all things were done in number, weight and measure; that nothing could have been otherwise than it is disposed of, without the

abridgment

abridgment of the glory of God, and the good of his Church. Yea, I dare say, that there is no faint of God, that is distressed by any dispensation of providence, but that if he will seriously and impartially consider his own state and condition, the frame of his heart, his temptations, and ways, with so much of the aims and ends of the Lord as will assuredly be discovered to faith and prayer, but he will have some rays and beams of infinite wisdom shining in it, tempered with love, goodness and faithfulness. But whether for the present we have this light or not, or are left unto darkness, this is the haven and rest of our tossed souls, the ark and bosom of our peace, to humble our souls to the infinite wisdom of God in all his procedure; and on that account quietly to commit all things to his management.

3.) His Righteousness. Tho' God will have us acquiesce in his sovereignty, when we can see nothing else: yet he will have us know, that all his ways are equal and righteous. The holy God will do no iniquity. That he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works, is pleaded as much as any thing that he hath discovered of himself. Shall not the judge of all the world do right? Is God unjust who inflicteth vengeance? God forbid. The righteousness of God, all which springeth from, and is reduced to the universal rectitude of his nature, in respect of the works that he doth, is manifold. It is that which is called *Justitia regiminis*, his righteousness in rule or government, in the dispensation of rewards and punishments, that I am speaking of. Now, because we are not able to discern it in many particulars of his proceedings, to help us in humbling our souls unto it, take these considerations.

(1. That God judgeth not as man judgeth. Man judgeth according to the seeing of the eye, and the hearing of the ear; but God searcheth the heart. Little do we know what is in the heart of men; what transactions there are, or have been between God and them, which, if they were drawn forth as they shall be one day, the righteousness of God in his procedure, would shine as the sun. Rest on this, we know much less of the matter, on the account whereof God judgeth, than we do of the rule whereby he judges. Most things are to him otherwise than to us.

(2. God is the great Judge of all the world, not of this, or that particular place; and so disposeth of all, as may tend to the good of the whole, and his glory in the universality of things. Our thoughts are bounded, much more our observation and knowledge, within a very narrow compass. That may seem deformed unto us, which when it lies under an eye that at once hath a prospect of the whole, is full of beauty and order. He that was able to see at once but some one small part of a goodly statue, might think it a deformed piece; when he that sees it altogether is assured of its due proportion and comeliness. All things in all places, of the age past and to come, lie at once naked before God, and he disposes of them so, as that in their contexture and answer one to another, they shall be full of order, which is properly righteousness.

(3. God judges here, not by any final determinate sentence, but in a way of a preparation to a judgment to come. This unties all knots, and salves all difficulties whatever. This makes righteous and beautiful the deepest distresses of the godly, and the highest advancements of wicked men. And there let our souls rest themselves in quietness, *Acts xvii.*

4.) His goodness, kindness, love, tenderness. Our souls must submit themselves to believe all these to be in all God's dispensations. I shall but name that one place wherein the Apostle disputes for it, *Heb. xii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.* and add that wherewith *Hosea* closes his declaration of God's various dispensations and dealings with his people, *Chap. xiv. 9.*

This now it is to humble our souls to the law of God's providence, in all his dispensations, to fall down before his sovereignty, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, love and mercy. And without this frame of heart, there is no walking with God; unless we intend to come into his presence to quarrel with him, which will not be for our advantage.

This was *Paul's* frame, *Phil. iv. 11.* I have *learned* it, saith he, it is not in me by nature; but I have now learned it by faith, I have humbled my soul to it; *ἐν οἷς αἶμα*, in the things, state, condition, good or bad, high or low, at liberty, or in prison, respected or despised, in health or sickness, living or dying, *ἐν οἷς αἶμα*, therein to bow my self to the law of the good providence of God, which is contentment. So was it also with *David*, *Psal. cxxxi. 1.* He did not exercise himself, or trouble him-

self about the ways and works of God, that were too high and too hard for him. How then did he behave himself? *ver. iii.* Something in his heart would have been enquiring after those things, but he quieted himself, and humbled his soul to the law of the providence of God; which hath that comfortable issue, mentioned, *ver. iii.* an exhortation not to dispute the ways of God, but to hope and trust in him, on the account mentioned before. This is also the advice that *James* gives to believers of all sorts, *chap. i. 9, 10.* Let every one rejoice in the dispensations of God, willingly bowing their hearts to it.

This is a popular argument of daily use. Should I insist on the reasons of it, its consequence, effects and advantage; its necessity, if we desire that God should have any glory, or our own souls any peace, the perfect conquest that will be obtained by it over the evil of every condition, and stretch it in application to the saddest particular cases imaginable, for all which the Scripture abounds in directions; I should go too far out of my way.

This then I say is the second thing we are to humble ourselves unto.

2. My other enquiry remains, namely, how or by what means we are thus to humble ourselves to the law of grace and providence.

I shall but name one or two of the principal graces, in the exercise whereof, this may be performed.

(1.) Let faith have its work. There are among others two things that faith will do, and is suited to do, that lie in a tendency hereunto.

[1.] It empties the soul of self. This is the proper work of faith, to discover the utter emptiness, insufficiency, nothingness that is in man unto any spiritual end or purpose whatever. So *Ephes. ii. 8, 9.* Faith itself is of God, not of ourselves; and it teaches us to be all by grace, and not by any work of ours. If we will be any thing in ourselves, faith tells us then it is nothing to us; for it only fills them that are empty, and makes them all by grace, who are nothing by self. While faith is at work, it will fill the soul with such thoughts as these: I am nothing, a poor worm at God's disposal, lost if not found by Christ; have done, can do nothing on the account whereof I should be accepted with God; surely God is to be in all things submitted to; and the way of his mere grace accepted. So *Rom. iii. 27.* This is the proper work of faith, to exclude and shut out boasting in our selves; that is, to render us to ourselves such as have nothing at all to glory or rejoice in, in ourselves, that God may be all in all. Now this working of faith will keep the heart in a readiness to subject it self unto God in all things, both in the law of his grace and providence.

[2.] Faith will actually bring the soul to the foot of God, and give it up universally to his disposal. What did the faith of *Abraham* do when it obeyed the call of God? *Isa. xli. 2.* It brought him to the foot of God. God called him to be at his disposal universally, by faith to come to it, following him, he knew not for what, nor whither. Leave thy father's house and kindred: he disputes it not. Cast out *Ismael*, whom thou lovest: he is gone. Sacrifice thine only *Isaac*: he goes about it. He was brought by faith to the foot of God, and stood at his disposal for all things. This is the proper nature of faith, to bring a man to that condition. So was it with *David*, *2 Sam. xv. 26, 27.* This faith will do. Will God have me to suffer in my name, estate, family? It is the Lord, faith faith. Will he have me to be poor, despised in the world, of little or no use at all to him or his people? Who, faith faith, shall say to him, what doest thou? In any state and condition faith will find out arguments, to keep the soul always at God's disposal.

(2.) Constant abiding reverence of God will help the soul in this universal resignation, and humbling of itself. Now this reverence of God, is an awful spiritual regard of the majesty of God, as he is pleased to concern himself in us, and in our walking before him, on the account of his holiness, greatness, omniscience, omnipresence, and the like. So *Heb. xii. 28, 29.* *Psal. lxxxix. 7.* *Psal. iii. 9.*

Now this reverence of God ariseth from three things, as is evident from the description of it.

[1.] The infinite excellency and majesty of God and his great name. This is the Apostle's motive, *Heb. xii. 29.* and *iv. 13.* So *Deut. xxviii. 58.* The excellency of God in itself, is not only such as makes wicked men and hypocrites to tremble, whenever the thoughts of it seizes on them, *Isa. xxxiii. 14.* but also it hath filled the

saints

saints themselves with dread and terror, *Heb.* iii. 16. Nor is there any bearing the rays of his excellency, but as they are shadowed in Christ, by whom we have boldness to approach unto him.

[2.] The infinite, inconceivable distance wherein we stand from him. Thence is that direction of the wise man to a due regard of God at all times, *Eccles.* v. 2. He is in heaven, whence he manifests his glorious excellency in a poor worm creeping on the mire and clay of the earth. So did *Abraham*, *Gen.* xviii. 27. What an inconceivable distance is there between the glorious majesty of God, and a little dust which the wind blows away and it is gone?

[3.] That this inconceivably glorious God is pleased of his own grace to condescend to concern himself in us poor worms, and our services which he stands in no need of, *Isa.* lvii. 15. His eye is upon us, his heart is towards us. This makes *David* break into that admiration, *1 Chron.* xvii. 16; and should do so to us.

Now what are the advantages of keeping alive a reverence of God in our hearts; how many ways it effectually conduces to enable us to humble our souls to the law of his grace and providence; what an issue it will put to all the reasonings of our hearts to the contrary; I cannot stay to declare. And the improvement of these two graces, faith and reverence, is all that I shall at present recommend unto you, for the end and purpose under consideration.

But I come in the next place to that part of this whole discourse which was at first principally intended.

S E R M O N VII.

WE have at large considered the nature of this duty.

III. Let us now proceed to prove the proposition at first laid down, and shut up the whole, *viz.*

Humble walking with God is the great duty, and most valuable concernment of believers.

What doth the Lord thy God require of thee? This is sufficiently asserted in the words of the text it self, which being so emphatically proposed, stand not in need of any farther confirmation by testimony: but because this is a business the Scripture doth much abound in, I shall subjoin a single proof upon each part of the alteration: that it is both our great duty, and most valuable concernment.

For the former take that parallel place of *Deut.* x. 12, 13. That which is summarily expressed in my text by walking humbly with God, is here more at large described, with the same preface, *What doth the Lord thy God require of thee?* It gives us both the root and fruit; the root, in fear and love; the fruit in walking in God's ways, and keeping his commandments. The perfection of both is to fear and love the Lord with all the heart and all the soul, and to walk in all his ways. This is the great thing that God requires of professors.

A place of the same importance, as to the excellency of this concernment of believers, which is the second consideration of it, you have in the answer of the scribe commended by our Saviour, *Mark* xii. 33. as if he should say in these days: This is better than all your preaching, all your hearing, all your private meetings, all your conferences, all your fastings: whole burnt offerings and sacrifices were then the instituted worship of God, appointed by him, and acceptable to him, as are the things which I now repeated. But all these outward things may be counterfeited, hypocrites may perform the outward work of them, as they then offered sacrifice; but walking humbly with God cannot: nor are they, in the best of men, of any value, but as they are parts and fruits of humble walking. If in and under the performance of them, there be, as there may be, a proud unmortified heart, not subdued to the

law of the spirit of life, not humbled in all things to walk with God, both they, and their performance, are abhorred of God. So that tho' these things ought to be done, yet our great concernment lyes as to the main in humble walking: *Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel.*

This is the import of the expression at the beginning of the verse; *What doth the Lord thy God require of thee?* Thou mayst cast about in thy thoughts to other things, wherein either thy self may be more delighted, or, as thou supposest, may be more acceptable to God. Be not mistaken, this is the great thing that he requires of thee, to walk humbly with him.

The grounds of it are:

1. Every man is most concerned in that which is his great end; the bringing about of that, is of most importance to him; the great exercise of his thoughts are, whether he shall succeed as to this or not. The chief end of believers is the glory of God. This, I say, is so, or ought to be so. For this purpose they were made, redeemed to this purpose, and purchased to be a peculiar people. Now the Scripture every where teaches, that the great means of our glorifying God, is by our humble walking with him, according as it was before described, *John xv. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.* You may have many thoughts that God is glorified by works of miracles, and the like, amazing and dazzling the eyes of the world. Be it so; but in the most eminent manner, it is by your bearing fruit. You know the general rule that our Saviour gives his followers, *Matth. v. 16.* It is from our good works that men give glory to God. Which advice is again renewed by the Holy Ghost, *1 Pet. ii. 12.*

Now there are sundry ways, whereby glory redounds to God by believers humble walking with him. (1.) It gives him the glory of the doctrine of grace. (2.) It gives him the glory of the power of his grace. (3.) It gives him the glory of the law of his grace; that he is a King obeyed. (4.) It gives him the glory of his justice. (5.) The glory of his kingdom; *First*, in its order and beauty; *Secondly*, in multiplying his subjects.

(1.) It gives God the glory of the doctrine of grace, or of the doctrine of the Gospel, which is therefore called the glorious Gospel of God, because it so brings glory to him. Walking according to this rule, we adorn the doctrine of the Gospel in all things: so the Apostle tells us, *Tit. ii. 11, 12.* This is that which this grace teacheth us; the substance is, to walk humbly with God. And when men professing it, walk answerable to it, it is rendred glorious. When the world shall see, that these are the fruits which that doctrine produceth, they must needs magnify it. The pride, folly, and wickedness of professors, hath been the greatest obstacle that ever the Gospel received in this world: nor will it by any endeavours whatever be advanced, until there be more conformity unto it, in them who make the greatest profession of it. Then is the word glorified, when it hath a free course and progress, *2 Thes. iii. 1.* which it will not have without the humble walking of professors. What eminent gifts are poured out in the days wherein we live? What light is bestowed? What pains in preaching? How is the dispensation of the word multiplied? Yet how little ground is got by it? How few converted? The word hath a free course in preaching, but is not glorified in acceptable obedience. Is it not high time for professors and preachers to look at home, whether the obstacle lye not in our selves? Do we not fortify the world against the Doctrine we profess, by the fruits of it they see in our selves, and our own ways? Do they not say of us, These are our new lights and professors, proud, selfish, worldly, unrighteous, negligent of the ordinances themselves profess to magnify, useless in their places and generations, falling into the very same path which they condemn in others? Perhaps they may deal falsely and maliciously in these things. But is it not high time for us to examine our selves, lest abounding in preaching and talking, we have forgot to walk humbly with God, and so not glorifying the Gospel, have hindred the free course of its work and efficacy?

(2.) Humble walking with God, gives him the glory of the power of his grace; his converting, sanctifying grace. When the world shall see a poor, proud, selfish, rebellious, froward, perhaps dissolute and debauched creature, made gentle, meek, humble, self-denying, sober, useful, they cannot but enquire after the secret and hidden virtue and power which principled such a change. This is given as the glory

of the grace that was to be administred under the Gospel, that it should change the nature of the vilest men; that it should take away cruelty from the wolf, and violence from the leopard, rage from the lion, and poison from the asp, making them gentle and useful as the kid and the calf, the cow and the ox, *Isa.* xi. 6, 7, 8, 9. It is not in our nature to humble our selves to walk with God; we have an opposition to it, and all parts of it; no angels or men can persuade us to it; our carnal mind is enmity to him, not subject to his law, nor can be. To have our souls humbled, brought to the foot of God, made always ready, willing, obedient, turned in their whole course, changed in all their ways and principles, this glorifies the grace of God which is dispensed in Christ, by which alone it is, that the work is wrought. When men make profession to have received converting and renewing grace from God, and so separate themselves from the men of the world on that account, yet live as they do, or worse, so that their ways and walking are contemptible to all, it is the greatest reproach imaginable to that work of grace which they make profession of.

(3.) This gives God the glory of his law, whereby he requires this obedience at our hands. The obedience of them that are subject to it, sets forth the glory of the wisdom, goodness, and power of the Law-giver, in that law. But this may be referred to the first head.

(4.) It gives him the glory of his justice, even in this world. There are two sorts of people in the world; the children of God, and others: temptations lye on both, in reference to each other. The children of God are often disturbed by the outward prosperity of the wicked: the men of the world, at the publick claim which they make in the privilege of God's love and protection: why they rather than others, than we? For the first, we know upon what principle they are to satisfy themselves. For the latter, this gives God the glory of his justice, when those whom he owns in this world, who expect a crown of reward from him, do walk humbly with him. So the Apostle, *2 Thes.* i. 4, 5. Your patience and faith in tribulation, saith he to the saints, is a manifest token of the righteous judgments of God, that ye may be counted worthy of his kingdom. Their patient and humble walking will be an evidence to convince even the world of the righteous justice of God, in rewarding of them, and rejecting of it self. Though eternal life be the gift of God, and chiefly respects the praise of his glorious grace in Jesus Christ, yet God intending to bestow it on us in a way of reward, he will therein visibly glorify his justice also. Now this gives a foretaste of it unto men, when they shall see those whom he will reward, to walk humbly with him; wherein it may appear that his ways are equal, and his judgment righteous, or, as the Apostle speaks, *according to truth*.

(5.) It gives him the glory of his kingdom, in being an effectual means for the increase of the number of his subjects, and so the propagation of it in the world.

Now if on all these, and on sundry other considerations, God be glorified in an humble walking with him, beyond any thing else in this world; this humble walking must certainly be the great and incomparable concernment of all them, whose chief end is the advancement of the glory of God.

2. It is our great concernment, because God is greatly delighted in it, it is well pleasing to him: the humble walking of professors is the great delight of the soul of God; all that he hath in this world to delight in. If this be our aim, if this be our great interest, that we may please God, that he may delight in us, and rejoice over us, this is the way whereby it is to be done, *Isa.* lvii. 15. As I dwell, saith God, in the high and holy place, delight to abide in the heavens, where I manifest my glory; so I dwell with the humble and contrite spirit with delight and joy. Men in an opposition to this frame, be they what they will else in outward profession, are proud men. Nothing takes away pride in the sight of God, but this humble walking with him. Now the proud he knoweth afar off, *Psal.* cxxviii. 6. he takes notice of them with scorn and indignation, they are to him an abominable thing. It is three times solemnly asserted in the Scriptures, that God resisteth the proud, or scorneth the scorner, and giveth grace to the humble and lowly, *Prov.* iii. 34. *Jam.* iv. 6. *1 Pet.* v. 5. God scorns, abominates, resists, and sets himself against such men; but he gives grace or favour to the lowly, to the humble. This is admirably set out, *Isa.* lxvi. 1, 2, 3. He deals there with a professing people, men that in all they did, said, Let the Lord be glorified, *ver.* 5. These men aiming at acceptance with him, and to have him delight in them, pretended principally two things.

(1.) The

(1.) The glory of the temple, that high and holy house that was built to his own name. Says God, as to this, do you think that I have any need of it, or any delight in it, as it is such a goodly and glorious fabrick in your eyes? The heaven is my throne, saith he, and the earth my footstool, my hands have made all these things; what need have I of the house you have built, or what delight in it?

(2.) They pleaded his worship and service, the duties they performed therein, their sacrifices and oblations, praying, hearing: alas! saith God, all these things I abhor. And so he compares them to the things which his soul did most hate, and which he had most severely forbid, *ver. 3.* But if God will take delight in none of these things; if neither temple, nor ordinances, worship, nor duty of religion will prevail, what is it that he delights in? Saith the Lord, *To this man will I look*, I will rejoice over him, and rest in my love. Let now the proud pharisee come and boast his righteousness, his duties, his worship, and performances; the eye of God is on the poor creature behind the door, that is crying, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, that is giving himself up to sovereign mercy, and following after him upon that account. We have got a holiness that puffeth up; that in some hath little other fruit, but, Stand from me, I am holier than thou. God delights not in it. It is an hard thing to excel in humble walking, it is easier obtained by other ways, but God delights not in them.

3. It is our great concernment, because this makes us alone eminently conformable to Jesus Christ. When the Church is raised up to an expectation of his coming, she is bid to look for him as one *meek and lowly*, Zech. ix. 9. And when he calls men to a conformity to his example, this he proposes to them; *Learn of me*, saith he, *Matth. xi. 29.* What shall we learn of him? What doth he propose to our imitation? That we should work miracles, walk on the sea, open blind eyes, raise the dead, to speak as never man spake? No, saith he, this is not your concernment, but *learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls.* Let this mind be in you, saith the Apostle, *that was in Jesus Christ*, Phil. ii. 5. What mind was this? He describes it in the next *verse*, in his humbling, emptying himself, making himself poor, nothing, that he might do the will of God, coming to his foot, waiting for his command, doing his will cheerfully and readily. Let, saith he, this mind be in you, to be like Christ in this. I might go over all the contents of humble walking with God, and shew the excellency of Jesus Christ in them, and how our conformity to Christ doth principally consist therein. But I must hasten.

4. I might farther evince it, by an induction of the promises that are made unto humble walking with God. But this would be a long work to insist on the most considerable particulars; so that I shall wholly omit it.

5. It will appear so by comparing it with any thing else, wherein men may suppose their interest and concernment to lye.

(1.) Some men (I speak of professors) live as tho' their great concernments were in heaping up to themselves the things of this world. Their hearts are devoured with cares about them, and their thoughts taken up with them. This I shall not so much as compare with humble walking with God, nor make it my business from the vanity, uncertainty, usefulness as to any eternal end, unsatisfactoriness, attendings of fear, care, and love, to manifest their great incompetency once to come into consideration in this enquiry, as to what is the great concernment of a professor.

(2.) There are others whose designs lye after greatness, high places, esteem in the world, to be some body in their days, outrunning the providence and call of God to that end, and who make this their business and interest, without farther consideration. But we may say the same of these, as of the former: their way is folly, though they that follow them should praise their sayings.

(3.) There are those, whose aim is to be learned indeed, and so accounted. This they make their work; on this they set up their rest; this takes up their time and strength; if this succeed, all is well, they have their hearts desire. The beauty of this also is fully sullied, and the vanity of it hath been discovered by many, and the shame of its nakedness made to appear. Is this thy great concernment? Dost thou waste thy time and spirit about it? Is this the bosom of thy rest? Hast thou here laid up thy glory? And dost thou aim at this as thy end? Poor creature, thou snuffest up the empty wind! All this while God may abhor thee; and thy learning will never

swell

swell to such a greatness, as that the door of hell will not be wide enough to receive thee. The vanity, vexation, dreadfulness, emptiness of this concernment, may be easily discovered.

Nay, put all these together; suppose thou hast high places, learning, and an answerable repute and credit to them all, that thou hadst on these heads all that thy heart can desire, and more than ever man had before thee; would it all give rest to thy soul? Canst thou not look through it all? Why then dost thou spend thy strength for a thing of nought? Why is the flower of thy spirit laid out about these things, that indeed are not, or as a thing of nought? But

(4.) Some men great concernment seems to lye in a profession of religion. So they may attain to that, and therewithal a name to live, it doth suffice. Whether this humble walking with God, in any of the causes or effects of it, be found on them, they are not solicitous. That men may not rest here, give me leave to offer two or three considerations.

[1.] All that they do, may be counterfeited, and so wherein is its excellency? It may be done by him who hath not the least of God or Christ in him. Hypocrites may hear much, pray often, speak of God, and the things of God, perform all duties of religion, excel in gifts and parts, be forward in profession to a great repute, and yet be hypocrites still.

[2.] All this hath been done by them who have perished. Many who are now in hell, have done all these things, and went down to the pit with the burden of their profession and duties at their back: I could reckon up instances. And let me but try this foundation, which safely I may, namely, that whatever excellencies have been found in hypocrites and perishing souls, may all meet in one, and yet he be an hypocrite still, and I shall merit easily the best of mere profession. Take the zeal of *Jehu*, the hearing of *Herod*, the praying of the Pharisee, the fasting of the *Jews*, *Isa.* lviii. the joy of the stony ground, and you may dress up a perishing soul, to a proportion of beauty in profession, beyond what the most of us attain unto.

[3.] It is useless in the world. I shall freely say, take away this humble walking, and all profession is a thing of nought; it doth no good at all in the world. Is it for the advantage of mankind, that a man should have credit and repute in religion, and cannot give an instance scarce, that any man, high or low, rich or poor, hath been the better for him in the world? That they who should do good to all, do good to none at all? Is this being fruitful in the Gospel? Is this studying the good works that are profitable to all? Is this doing good to mankind in the places wherein we are?

[4.] This is the readiest way for a man to deceive himself to eternity. He that would go down to the pit in peace, let him keep up duties in his family and closet, let him hear as often as he can have opportunity, let him speak often of good things, let him leave the company of profane and ignorant men, until he have obtained a great repute for religion; let him preach, and labour to make others better than he is himself, and in the mean time neglect to humble his heart to walk with God in a manifest holiness and usefulness, and he will not fail of his end.

Let me not be mistaken, God forbid I should countenance profane men in their contempt of the ways of God, and the reproaches of hypocrisy that they are ready to cast upon the best of the saints of God: I say, God forbid. Not let me be interpreted in the least to plead for men who satisfy themselves in a righteousness without these things, whom I look upon as men ignorant wholly of the mystery of God and the Father, and of Christ, and evidently uninterested in the covenant of grace. No, this is all I aim at; I would not have professors flatter themselves in a vain, empty profession, when the fruits they bear of envy, hatred, pride, folly, proclaim that their hearts are not humbled to walk with God. Will then these, or any of these things stand in competition with that which we propose for the great concernment of souls? Doubtless, in comparison of it, they are all a thing of nought.

Use 1. Is humble walking with God our great concernment? Let us make it our business and our work to bring our hearts unto it all our days. What do we running out of the way all the day long, spending our strength for that which is not bread? My business is not, whether I be rich or poor, wise or unwise, learned or ignorant, whether I shall live or die, whether there shall be peace or war with the nations, whether my house shall flourish or wither, whether my gifts be many or few, great

great or small, whether I have good repute or bad repute in the world: but only whether I walk humbly with God or not? As it is with me in this respect, so is my present condition, so will be my future acceptation. I have tired my self about many things, this one is necessary: What doth the Lord my God require of me, but this? What doth Christ call for, but this? What doth the whole sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost tend to, but that I may walk humbly with God?

Give me leave to name a motive or two unto it.

(1.) In humble walking with God, we shall find peace in every condition. *Learn of me, I am meek and lowly, and you shall find rest to your souls.* Let war come on the nation, I shall have peace. Let a consumption come on my estate, I shall have peace. Let nearest relations be taken away, I shall have peace. The soul that sets up its rest, and makes it its great concernment to walk humbly with God, is brought to his foot, bent to his will, is ready for his disposal; and whatever God does in the world with himself, his, or others, he hath peace and quietness in it; his own will is gone, the will of God is his choice; his great concernment lyes not in any thing that can perish, that can be lost.

(2.) We shall also find comfort. *Mephibosheth* cried, Let all go, seeing the king is come in peace, which was all that I desired. When a man shall see in the world state and condition, that his great concernment is safe; that though all is lost, God, who is all, is not lost; that this can never be taken from him, it fills his heart with delight. Is he in prosperity? He fears not the loss of that which he most values. Is he in adversity? Yet he can walk with God still, which is his all. He can therefore glory in tribulations, rejoice in afflictions, his treasure, his concernment is secure.

(3.) This alone will make us useful in our generation, and fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. On this depends all the glory we bring to God, and all the good we do to men.

Let us then make this our business; aim at it; and in the strength of Christ, we shall have peace in it.

Use 2. To humble us all, that we have spent so much of our time and days in and about things wherein we are indeed so little concerned, let us a little bring our ways and affairs to the balance of the sanctuary. One hath risen early, gone to bed late, and worn out himself to increase knowledge and learning. What is it when we have done? An engine in the hand of Satan to puff us up with pride and folly; a diversion from the knowledge of Christ, full of vexation of spirit. How many other things have entangled us? What weight have we laid upon them? How have we put a value upon that profession, which hath been a shame rather than an honour to the Gospel? The Lord forgive us our folly, in spending our selves in and about things wherein we are so little concerned; and help us, that our mistake be not at last found out to be fatal. Could we seriously take a view of our ways and time, and see how much of it we have spent in and about things that indeed will, in the issue, do us no good; it would certainly fill our souls with a great deal of shame and confusion.

Use 3. As to them who seem not at all to be concerned in this business; who never made it their design in their lives to walk with God in the way that hath been spoken to: let me tell such

(1.) It is more than probable, that they may be apt to take advantage at what hath been spoken against empty professors and profession, to triumph in their thoughts against them all, and say Such indeed they are and no better. If so, it is possible that this discourse thro' the just judgment of God, may tend to their farther hardning in their sin, pride and folly. What is the Lord's intendment towards you, I know not. It is my duty to warn you of it. Some that are professors may fail of the mark of our high calling; but you that are none can never attain it: but take heed, that this be not the issue of this dispensation of the word towards you. I had rather never speak more in this place, than speak any one word with an intention to give you an advantage against professors; if you take it, it will be your ruin.

(2.) Consider this, if the righteous be scarcely saved, where will you and such as you, bitter scoffers, neglecters of ordinances, haters of the power of godliness, and the purity of religion appear? You whose pride and folly, or whose formality, lukewarmness, and superstition, whose company and society, whose ways and daily walking, proclaim you to be wholly strangers to this concernment of believers? I say, what will be your lot and portion?

(3.) Con-

(3.) Consider how useless you are in this world. You bring no glory to God, but dishonour; and whereas by any outward acts, you may suppose you do good sometimes to men; know that you do more hurt every day, than you do good all your lives. How many are by you insnared into hell? How many hardened? How many destroyed by living in formality or prophaneness?

S E R M O N VIII.

Providential Changes, an argument for universal Holiness.

2 PET. iii. 11.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

THAT this *second Epistle* was written unto the same persons to whom the former was directed, the Apostle himself informs us, *chap. iii. v. 1.* Who they were to whom the *first* was directed, he declares fully 1. *Ep. i. 1, 2.* Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, &c.

Strangers are taken two ways: *First*, In a large, general, and spiritual sense. So all believers are said to be strangers and pilgrims in this world, because they are not of the world, but they look for another country, another city, another house whose framer and builder is God. *Secondly*, In a proper, natural sense; for those who abide or dwell in a land that is not their own, wherein they have not right of inheritance with the natives and citizens of it. In this sense, the patriarchs were strangers in the land of *Canaan*, before it came to be the possession of their posterity: and the children of *Israel* were strangers 400 years in the land of *Egypt*.

Now though the persons to whom the Apostle wrote, were strangers in the first sense; pilgrims whose conversation and country was in heaven, yet they were no more so than all other believers in the world; so that there was no just cause of saluting them peculiarly under that stile and title, were there not some other special reason of that appellation. They were therefore also strangers in the latter sense, persons who had no inheritance in the place of their abode, that were not the free and privileged natives of the country where they dwelt and inhabited, that is, they were *Jews* scattered abroad in those parts of the world.

The people of *Israel* in those days were under various distributions and appellations. *First*, They were the natives of *Jerusalem*, and the parts adjacent; and these were in the Gospel, peculiarly called *Jews*. You have it often mentioned, that in our Saviour's discourse with them, the *Jews* answered so and so, that is, the natives of *Jerusalem*, and places adjoining. *Secondly*, Those who inhabited the sea-coasts of the country, whom the others much despised, and called them, from the place of their habitation, as if they had been men of another nation, *Galileans*. *Thirdly*, Those who lived in several dispersions up and down the world among other nations. Of these there were two chief sorts, (1.) Those who lived in some parts of *Europe*, in *Asia* the less, also at *Alexandria*, and other *Greek* colonies. These are in the Scripture sometimes called *Greeks*, *Act. xvii.* and elsewhere, commonly termed *Hellenists*, because they used the *Greek* language, and the *Greek* Bible then in use. (2.) Those who lived in the greater *Asia*, in and about *Babylon*; as also in the countries here enumerated by the Apostle: the *Jews* converted to the faith, that lived scatteredly up and down in those parts of *Asia*.

Peter being in a special manner designed by the Holy Ghost the Apostle of the circumcision, and being now at *Babylon* in the discharge of his apostolical office and duty, 1 *Ep.* v. 13. and being now nigh unto death, which he also knew, 2 *Ep.* i. 14. and not perhaps having time to pass through, and personally visit these scattered believers; he wrote unto them these *two Epistles*, partly about the main and important truths of the Gospel, and partly about their own particular and immediate concernment, as to the temptations and afflictions wherewith they were exercised.

It is evident from sundry places in the New Testament, what extreme oppositions the believing *Jews* met withal all the world over from their own countrymen, with and among whom they lived. They in the mean time, no doubt, warned them of the wrath of Christ against them for their cursed unbelief and persecutions; particularly letting them know, that Christ would come in vengeance e'er long according as he had threatned, to the ruin of his enemies. And because the persecuting *Jews* all the world over upbraided the believers with the temple and the holy city *Jerusalem*, their worship and service instituted of God, which they had defiled; they were given to know, that even all these things also should be destroyed, for their rejection of the Son of God. After some continuance of time, the threatening denounced being not yet accomplished, as is the manner of prophane persons and hardened sinners, *Eccles.* viii. 11. they began to mock and scoff, as if they were all but the vain pretences, or loose, causeless fears of the Christians. That this was the state with them, or shortly would be, the Apostle declares in this *chapter*, ver. 3. 4. Because things continued in the old state without alteration, and judgment was not speedily executed, they scoffed at all the threats about the coming of the Lord, that had been denounced against them.

Hereupon the Apostle undertakes these three things:

First, He convinces the scoffers of folly by an instance of the like presumption in persons not unlike them, and the dealings of God in a case of the same nature.

Secondly, He instructs believers in the truth of what they had before been told concerning the coming of Christ, and the destruction of ungodly men.

Thirdly, He informs them in the due use and improvement, that ought practically to be made of the certainty of this threatening of the coming of Christ.

For the *first* he minds them, as I said, of the old world, ver. 5, 6. Before the destruction of that world, God sent *Noah* a preacher of righteousness, who both in word and deed effectually admonished men of the judgment of God, that was ready to come upon them: but they scoffed at his preaching and practice, in building the ark, and persisted in their security. Now, saith he, *this they are willingly ignorant of*, it is thro' the obstinacy and stubbornness of their will, they do not consider it; for otherwise they had the Scripture, and knew the story. There is no ignorance like that, where mens obstinacy and hardness in sin keeps them from a due improvement of what they ought to have improved to its proper purpose. They are to this day willingly ignorant of the flood who live securely in sin, under the denunciation of the judgments of God against sin.

I shall only observe by the way, not to look into the difficulties of these *verses*, that I be not too long detained from my principal intendment, that the Apostle makes a distribution of the world into *heaven* and *earth*, and saith, they *were destroyed with water, and perished*. We know that neither the fabrick or substance of the one or other was destroyed, but only men that lived on the earth; and the Apostle tells us, v. 7. of the *heaven and earth that were then*, and *were destroyed by water*, distinct from the *heavens and the earth that were now*, and *were to be consumed by fire*: and yet as to the visible fabrick of heaven and earth, they were the same both before the flood and in the Apostle's time, and continue so to this day; when yet it is certain, that the heavens and earth whercof he speaks, were to be destroyed and consumed by fire in that generation. We must then for the clearing our foundation, a little consider what the Apostle intends by the heavens and the earth in these two places.

1. It is certain, that what the Apostle intends by the world with its heavens and earth, v. 5, 6. which was destroyed; the same or somewhat of that kind he intends by the heavens and the earth that were to be consumed and destroyed by fire, v. 7. otherwise there would be no coherence in the Apostle's discourse, nor any kind of argument, but a mere fallacy of words.

2. It

2. It is certain, that by the flood, the world, or the fabrick of heaven and earth, was not destroyed, but only the inhabitants of the world; and therefore the destruction intimated to succeed by fire, is not of the substance of the heavens and the earth, which shall not be consumed until the last day, but of persons or men living in the world.

3. Then we must consider, in what sense men living in the world are said to be the world, and the heavens and earth of it. I shall only insist on one instance to this purpose, among many that may be produced. *Isa. li. 15, 16.* The time when the work here mentioned of planting the heavens, and laying the foundation of the earth, was performed by God, was when he *divided the sea*, ver. 15. and gave the law, ver. 16. and said to Sion, *Thou art my people*; that is, when he took the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, and formed them in the wilderness into a Church and state; then he planted the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth; made the new world; that is, brought forth order, and government, and beauty, from the confusion wherein before they were. This is the planting of the heavens, and laying the foundation of the earth in the world. And hence it is, that when mention is made of the destruction of a state and government, it is in that language that seems to set forth the end of the world. So *Isa. xxxiv. 4.* which is yet but the destruction of the state of *Edom*. The like also is affirmed of the *Roman* empire, *Rev. vi. 14.* which the *Jews* constantly affirm to be intended by *Edom* in the Prophets. And in our Saviour Christ's prediction of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, *Matth. xxiv.* he sets it out by expressions of the same importance. It is evident then, that in the prophetical idiom and manner of speech, by heavens and earth, the civil and religious state and combination of men in the world, and the men of them are often understood. So were the heavens and earth that world which then was destroyed by the flood.

4. On this foundation, I affirm, that the heavens and earth here intended in this prophesy of *Peter*, the coming of the Lord, the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men, mentioned in the destruction of that heaven and earth, do all of them relate, not to the last and final judgment of the world, but to that utter desolation and destruction that was to be made of the Judaical church and state; for which I shall offer these two reasons, of many that might be insisted on from the text.

(1.) Because whatever is here mentioned, was to have its peculiar influence on the men of that generation. He speaks of that wherein both the profane scoffers, and those scoffed at, were concerned, and that as *Jews*; some of them believing, others opposing the faith. Now there was no particular concernment of that generation, nor in that sin, nor in that scoffing, as to the day of judgment in general; but there was a peculiar relief for the one, and a peculiar dread for the other at hand in the destruction of the *Jewish* nation; and besides an ample testimony both to the one and the other of the power and dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was the thing in question between them.

(2.) *Peter* tells them, that after the destruction and judgment that he speaks of, ver. 13. *We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, &c.* they had this expectation. But what is that promise? Where may we find it? Why we have it in the very words and letter, *Isa. lxv. 17.* Now when shall this be that God will create these new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness? Saith *Peter*, it shall be after the coming of the Lord, after that judgment and destruction of ungodly men, who obey not the Gospel, that I foretel. But now it is evident from this place of *Isaiah*, with *chap. lxvi. 21, 22.* that this is a prophesy of Gospel times only; and that the planting of these new heavens, is nothing but the creation of Gospel ordinances to endure for ever. The same thing is so expressed, *Heb. xii. 26, 27, 28.*

This being then the design of the place, I shall not insist longer on the context, but briefly open the words proposed, and fix upon the truth contained in them.

First, There is the foundation of the Apostle's inference and exhortation, seeing that I have evinced that all these things, however precious they seem, or what value soever any put upon them, shall be dissolved, that is, destroyed; and that in that dreadful and fearful manner before mentioned, in a way of judgment, wrath, and vengeance, by fire and sword; let others mock at the threats of

of Christ's coming, he will come, he will not tarry: and then the heavens and earth that God himself planted, the sun, moon, and stars of the *Judaical* polity and church, the whole old world of worship and worshipers that stand out in their obstinacy against the Lord Christ, shall be sensibly dissolved and destroyed; this we know shall be the end of these things, and that shortly.

There is no outward constitution nor frame of things in governments or nations, but it is subject to a dissolution, and may receive it, and that in a way of judgment. If any might plead exemption, that on many accounts of which the Apostle was discouraging, in prophetic terms, (for it was not yet time to speak it openly to all) might interpose for its share. But that also, tho' of God's creation, yet standing in the way of, and in opposition to the interest of Christ, that also shall be dissolved: and certainly there is no greater folly in the world, than for a mere human creation, a mere product of the sayings and the wisdom of men, to pretend for eternity, or any duration beyond the coincidence of its usefulness to the great ends that Christ hath to accomplish in the world. But this is not my business.

Secondly, There is the Apostle's inference from, or exhortation on this supposition, expressed emphatically by way of interrogation: *What manner?*

Now herein two things are included.

1. The evidence of the inference. It follows necessarily, unavoidably; every one must needs make this conclusion: so that he leaves it to themselves to determine whose concernment it is. So the Apostle *Paul* in another case, *Heb. x. 29.* leaves it to themselves to determine, as a case clear, plain, unquestionable. So here: and this is a most effectual way of insinuating an inference and conclusion, when the parties themselves who are pressed with it, are made judges of its necessary consequence. Judge ye whether holiness becomes not all them who are like to be concerned in such providential alterations.

2. The extent and perfection of the duty in its universality and compass, is in this manner of expression strongly insinuated: *What manner of persons?* That is, such as indeed it is not easy to express, what attainments in this kind we ought on this account to press after. This Apostle useth the same kind of expression to set forth the greatness and height of what he would deliver to the thoughts of men, *1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.* There is in this kind of expression somewhat more insinuated to the mind, than we know how to cloath with any words whatever.

Two things seem principally to be intended.

(1.) That even the saints themselves in such cases ought to be other manner of men than usually they are, under ordinary dispensations of providence. Mistake not; our old measures will not serve; another manner of progress than as yet we have made, is expected from us; it is not ordinary holiness and godliness that is expected from us, under extraordinary calls from God and Christ.

(2.) That our endeavours to be godly and holy, ought to be boundless and endless. No less is included in this apostrophe, *What manner of persons ought we to be?* Not resting in what we have attained, nor what may seem sufficient to keep our heads above water, but an endless and boundless pressing on. Alas! it will hardly enter into our hearts to think what manner of men we ought to be.

Thirdly, For the matter of this exhortation and inference from the former principle couched in this interrogation, it is, *All holy conversation and godliness.* The word *All* is not in the original; but both the other words are in the plural number, *In holy conversations and godlinesses.* Now these expressions being not proper in our language, the translators have supplied the emphasis and force of them by the addition of the word, *All*: and there is no just cause of quarrel with them for so doing: only in the original the words are more weighty and emphatical than that supply doth readily reach unto. That which is principally intended, is, That all the concerns whatever of holiness and godliness, are couched in the words. So that two things are in them.

1. The two general parts of that universal duty that we owe to God; and they are these. *First*, holiness of conversation; which is comprehensive of all holiness and righteousness, both in principle and practice; for no conversation is holy, but what comes from an holy heart, and is carried on to that great and holy end, the glory of God. *Secondly*, godliness, or the worship of God according to the appointment and institution of Christ. This is the proper importance of *δωσθεα*, as distinct from

from holiness of conversation; a due adherence to, and observance of the instituted worship of God.

2. The extent and compass of them both and their degrees. It is not in this or that part of conversation; to be holy in one thing, and loose in another; to be holy in one capacity, and vain in another; to be godly as a private person, and ungodly or selfish as a magistrate; nor is it to observe one part of worship, and despise another: but in all concernments of conversation, in all parts of worship doth this duty lye: *In all holy conversation and godliness.*

Fourthly, There is the relation that we ought to bear to the universality of holiness and godliness. We ought to be in them: *οὐκ ἔσδεχεν ὑμᾶς, You ought to be, to exist* in them. In these things is your life; they are not to be followed now and then, as your leisure will serve; but in all that you do, you ought to be still in these, as in the cloaths that you wear, the garment that is on you; be what you will, or where you will, or employed as you are called, yet still you ought to be in holiness and godliness; and what persons you ought to be in them, or how, hath been declared.

OBSERVATION. *Great providential alterations or destructions made upon the account of Christ and his Church, call for eminency of universal holiness and godliness in all believers.*

I esteem it my duty to speak somewhat to this proposition, as containing the direction for our great duty in this day. That we have had many providential alterations amongst us, is known to all. What light I have about their relation to Christ and his Church, I shall make bold to communicate when I come to the application of the truth in hand, and thereby make way for the pressing of the duty of the text on our selves in particular: for the present, I confess, I am ashamed and astonished at the deportment of many who are professors in these days; they see and talk of the alterations and dissolutions that God is pleased to make; but what is the improvement that is made hereof? Many take advantage to vent their lusts and passions, some one way, some another; one rejoicing at the ruin of another, as if that were his duty; others repining at the exaltation of another, as if that were their duty; some contriving one form of outward constitutions, others for another; (I speak of private persons) but who almost looks to that which is the special call of God under such dispensations? Let us then, I pray you, take a little view of our duty, and the grounds of it; and who knows but that the Lord may by it enlarge and fix our hearts to the love and prosecution of it.

The two great providential alterations and dissolutions that have been, and shall be made on the account of Christ and his Church, to which all lesser are either consequent, or do lye in a tendency, are that *first* of the *Judaical* church and state, whereof I have spoken; and *secondly*, that of the *antichristian* state and worship, whereunto all the shakings of these nations seem to tend in the wisdom of God, although we are not able to discern their influence thereunto.

1. Now for the first of these, we may consider it in its coming as foretold, and as accomplished.

(1.) As it was foretold and threatened by Christ. How were believers cautioned to be ready for it with eminent holiness and watchfulness therein? So *Luke* xxi. 34, 36. *Take heed to your selves; watch therefore.* Why so? *Christ is coming*, ver. 27. When? *Why in this generation*, ver. 32. What to do? *Why to dissolve heaven and earth*, ver. 25. to destroy and dissolve the *Jewish* church and state. Watch therefore; give all diligence. So also *Matth.* xxiv. 42. *Watch therefore.* Oh! on this account what manner of persons ought we to be?

(2.) As accomplished. See what use the Apostle upon it directs believers unto, *Heb.* xii. 26, 27, 28. This is the use, this the call of providence in all these mighty alterations: *Let us have grace*, strive for it; the nature of the works of God call aloud for an eminent frame of holiness, and close adherence unto God in his worship. I could shew how both the duties of my text are here expressed; but I need not.

2. So is it also in reference to that other great work of God in the world relating to Christ and his Church, which is the ocean of providence whereinto all the rivulets of lesser alterations do run; I mean the destruction of *Antichrist* and his *Babylonish* kingdom.

What a frame shall be in the saints on the close of that work, the Holy Ghost declares at large, *Rev.* xix. All rejoicing and spiritual communion with God; and whilst the work is on the wheel, those whom God will own in it, he sets his mark on as holy, called, and chosen.

The grounds hereof are

I. Because in every such providential alteration or dissolution of things on the account of Christ and his Church, there is a peculiar coming of Christ himself. He cometh into the world for the work he hath to do: he cometh among his own to fulfil his pleasure among them. Hence such works are called his coming; and the coming of his day. Thus *James* exhorts these very *Jews*, to whom *Peter* here writes, with reference to the same things, *Jam.* v. 7, 8, 9. *Be patient to the coming of the Lord.* But how could that generation extend their patience to the day of judgment? Nay, saith he, that is not the work I design, but his coming to take vengeance on his stubborn adversaries, which he saith, *v.* 8. *draweth nigh*, is even at hand: yea, Christ *the judge standeth before the door*, *v.* 9. ready to enter; which also he did within a few years. So upon, or in the destruction of *Jerusalem*, the same work, *Luk.* xxi. 27. the Son of man is said to *come in the clouds, and great glory*; and they that escape in that desolation, are said to *stand before the Son of man*, *v.* 36. So, in the ruin and destruction of the *Roman* empire on the account of their persecution, it is said, *That the day of the wrath of the lamb was come*, *Rev.* vi. 16, 17.

In all such dispensations then, there is a peculiar coming of Christ, a peculiar drawing nigh of him to deal with all sorts of persons in a special manner; though he be oftentimes encompassed with many clouds, and with much darkness, yet he is present exerting his authority, power, wisdom, righteousness, and grace in an eminent manner. It is with him as it is with God in other works, *Job* ix. 11. though all *see him not, perceive him not*, yet *he goeth by, and passeth on*. The lusts, prejudices, corruptions, selfishness, injustice, oppressions of men; the darkness, unbelief, fears, carnal wisdom of the saints themselves; the depth, compass, height, unsearchableness of the path of the wisdom of Christ himself, keeps us in the dark as to his presence in this and that particular; but yet in such dispensations he is come, and passeth on towards the accomplishment of his work, though we perceive it not. Now, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, to meet this great King of saints at his coming? What preparation ought there to be? What solemnity of universal holiness for his entertainment? He is in such dispensations continually nigh us, whether we take notice of it or not.

I say then, if there be a special coming, and a special meeting of Christ in such dispensations, I suppose, I may leave the inference unto all holy conversation and godliness with the Apostle to the breasts and judgment of them that are concerned. Are we in this work to meet the Lord Jesus? What manner of persons ought we to be?

It may be observed, that Christ puts very great weight on the present frame and course, which he finds men in at his coming. *Matth.* xxiv. 46. *Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.* He annexes blessedness to the frame and course he finds men in at his coming; and waiteth for that hour, *ver.* 42. Be not asleep when the thief comes to break up the house; take heed that that day take you not unprovided, that you be not overtaken in the midst of the cares of this world. And he complains, that when he comes, he shall not *find faith on the earth*.

But you will say, Is this enough then, that we look to be found in all godliness and holiness at his coming? May we indulge our selves and our lusts at other seasons, so we be sure to be then provided? Is not the command of duty equal and universal as to all times and seasons? Or is it pointed only unto such dispensations?

Ans. 1. The inference for preparedness for the coming of Christ, is to universal holiness at all seasons, and that upon the account of the uncertainty of it. This our Saviour presseth again and again. You know not at all when it will be, nor how; no not in the least; you believe it not when it is come: I *shall not find faith of it in the earth*, saith Christ. Men will not take notice of it, nor acknowledge it, nor own it, as my coming; wherefore you have no way to be prepared for it, but by universal, perpetual watchfulness.

Ans. 2.

Answ. 2. The exhortation lies not unto holiness and godliness in general; but as to the degrees of it, what manner of men we ought to be in them. It is not a godly conversation at an ordinary rate that may find acceptance at another time, which will suffice to meet Christ at his coming, and that on sundry accounts after to be mentioned.

I shall at present only treat on some grounds of it from his own person who cometh, and whom we are to meet; and speak of the work he hath to do in his coming afterward.

(1.) On the account of his personal excellencies and holiness. Consider how he is described when he comes to walk among his Churches, *Revel.* i. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. He is full of beauty and glory. When *Isaiah* saw him, *chap.* 6. he cries out, *I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips*; because of the dread and terror of his holiness. And *Peter* also: *Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.* They were not able to bear the thoughts of his glorious holiness so nigh to them. When the holy God of old was to come down among the people at the giving of the law, all the people were to sanctify themselves, and to wash their cloaths, *Exod.* xix. 10, 11. And order was still taken, that no unclean thing might be in the camp, because of the presence of the holy God, though but in a type and resemblance. Whether we observe it or no, if there be any dissolving dispensations among us, that relate to Christ or his Church, there is an holy one in the midst of us; or there will be when any such dispensations shall pass over us. And to think to have to do in the works and ways wherein he hath to do, with hearts unlike and unsuitable unto him, to act our lusts and follies immediately under the eye of his holiness, to set our defiled hands to his pure and holy hands, his soul will abhor it. This is a boldness which he will revenge, that we should bring our neglect and lusts into his holy presence. Christ is in every corner, in every turn of our affairs; and it is incumbent on us to consider how it is fit for us to behave our selves in his special presence.

(2.) Upon the account of his authority. He who thus comes, is the King of saints, and he comes as the King of saints: he comes to exert his regal power and authority, to give a testimony to it in the world. So *Isa.* lxiii. 1, 2, 3, 4. He shews his glory, his might, his kingdom and authority in this work. So *Revel.* xix. 12. When he comes to destroy his antichristian enemies, he hath many crowns on his head; he exerciseth his regal power and authority. What is the duty of saints when their King is so nigh them, when he is come into the midst of them, whilst he puts forth the greatness of his power round about them? Will it become them to be neglective of him; to be each man in the pursuit of his own lusts, and ways, and works in the presence of their King? Holiness and godliness hath a due regard to the authority of Christ. Wherever there is a due subjection of soul unto Christ, all holy conversation and godliness will ensue. To be neglective in, or of any part of holy conversation, to be careless of any part of worship under the special eye of the Lord of our lives and our worship, is not to be born with.

(3.) On the account of the present care, kindness and love that he is exerting in all such dispensations towards his. It is a time of care and love; the way of his working out the designs of his heart, are indeed oftentimes dark and hid; and his own do not see so clearly how things lye in a tendency to the event and fruits of love. But so it is; Christ comes not but with a design of love and pity towards his, with his heart full of compassion for them. Now, what this calls for at their hands, seeing their holiness and worship is all that his soul is delighted in, is evident unto all.

Put now these things together: every such dispensation is a coming of Christ: the coming of Christ, as it is trying in itself, so it is the coming of the holy King of saints in his love and pity towards them; yea, be the dispensation what it will, never so sharp and severe unto them, yet it is in love and compassion to their souls: their work is to meet this their holy King in the works of his love and power: and what manner of persons ought we to be?

S E R M O N IX.

2. **T**HE second ground is, because every such day, is a lesser day of judgment, a forerunner, pledge, and evidence of that great day of the Lord which is to come. God's great and signal judgments in the world, are to be looked on as pledges of the final judgment at the last day. So *Jude* tells us, that in the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, God set forth an example of them that shall suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, ver. 7. And *Peter* calls the time of the destruction of the *Judaical* church and state, expressly the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men, 2 Ep. iii. 7. So to the full is the destruction of the *Roman*, persecuting state expressed, *Dan.* vii. 9, 10, 14. The solemnity of the work and whole procedure bespeaks a great day, a day of judgment; it is so, and a representation of that which is to come. And the like also is set forth, *chap.* xii. 1, 2, 3. And the same description have we of the like day of Christ, *Mal.* iv. 1.

Every such day, I say then, is a lesser day of judgment, wherein much judging work is accomplished. This *Daniel* tells us, *chap.* xii. 10. it is a trying, a purifying, a teaching, an hardning, a bleeding time: there are great works that are done upon the souls and consciences of men, by Christ, in such a day, as well as outwardly, and all in a way of judgment. To let pass then the outward, visible effects of his wrath and power, of his wisdom and righteousness; I shall consider some few of the more secret judiciary acts that the Lord Christ usually exerts in such a day.

(1.) He pleads with all flesh that are concerned in the alterations and desolations he makes. God puts this as one act of his in judgment, that he pleads with men. *Ezek.* xxxviii. 22. In his judgments he pleads with and against men about their sins. And in that great representation of the day of judgment, *Joel* iii. 2. God is said to plead with all nations. Now, I say, in general, Christ in such a day pleads with all men concerned. His providences have a voice, and that a contending, pleading voice: unless men are utterly blinded and hardned, as indeed the most are, they cannot but hear him in his great and mighty works contending with them about their sin and unbelief; representing to them his righteous judgment to come. Tho' men now cast off things, on this account and that, and being filled with their lusts, passions, fury, revenge, or ease, sensuality, and worldliness, think these things concern them not; yet the day will come, wherein they shall know, that the Lord Christ in his mighty works was pleading even with them also, and that in a way of judgment about their sin and folly.

(2.) In such a day Christ judges and determines the profession of many a false hypocrite, who hath deceived the Church and people of God. One great work of the last day shall be the discovery of hypocrites: it is thence principally called the day wherein the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. Many a fair pretender in the world, shall be found to have been an enemy of Christ and the Gospel. So is the day of Christ's coming in the flesh represented, *Mal.* iii. 1, 2. All were high in their professions of desiring his coming, and of delighting in him: but when he came, what was the issue? How few endured the trial? The false, hypocritical, selfish hearts, who had treasured up the hopes of great things to themselves, being discovered by the trials and temptations wherewith his coming was attended, themselves were utterly cast off from their profession, into open enmity to God and his Son. So dealeth the Lord Christ in and under the dispensations whereof we speak, to this day. What by the fury of their own lusts, what by the temptations which lye in their way, what by the advantages they meet withal for the exercise of their vile affections, their hypocrisy is discovered, and themselves cast out of their profession. Notable effects of this acting of Christ as a judge have we seen in the dispensation that is passing over us: some he hath judged by the sentence and judgment of his Churches. How many false wretches have been cast out of Churches, that have withered

withered under their judgment, and returned no more? Some who have not walked in the order of his Churches by him appointed, he hath judged by the world it self, suffered their sin and folly so to break forth, that the world it self hath cast them out from the number of professors, and owned them as its own. Some have been judged as to their profession of him by strong temptations; that is, their lusts, ambition, selfishness, which have carried them into ways and compliances, wherein they have been compelled to desert, and almost renounce all their former profession. Some have been tried and judged by the errors and abominations of the times, and turned aside from the simplicity of the Gospel. Now tho' there have been, and are these and many other ways and means of casting men out of, and from the profession that they have made, some good, some bad, some in themselves of a mere passive nature and indifferent; yet they all proceed from Christ, in a judicary way, they are acts of his, in his day of judgment; and oh, that *England* might not yet be farther filled with instances and examples of this kind!

(3.) He doth exercise his judgment in blinding and hardning of wicked men; yet they shall not see nor perceive what he is doing, but shall have advantages to do wickedly, and prejudices to blind them therein. So expressly, Dan. xii. 10. *They shall do wickedly, and they shall not understand.* There are two parts of his judgment in such a day about and against them: *First*, his giving of them up to their own lusts to do wickedly, *They shall do wickedly.* Wicked they are, and they shall act accordingly; they shall do it in such a day to the purpose, *Rev. xvi. 10, 11.* Christ will providentially suffer occasions, advantages, provocations to lye before them, so that they shall do wickedly to the purpose, they shall have daily fresh occasions to curse, repine, blaspheme, oppose Christ and his interest, or to seek themselves, and the satisfaction of their lusts, which at other times they shall not be able to do. Be they in what condition they will, high or low, exalted or depressed, in power or out of it, they shall in such a season do wickedly, according as their advantages and provocations are. And for men to be given up to their own hearts lusts, is the next door to the judgment of the great day, when men shall be given up to sin, self, and Satan unto eternity. *Secondly*, he blinds them: *None of the wicked shall understand.* Strange! Who seems so wise and so crafty as they? Who do understand the times, and their advantages in them, more than they? Who more prudent for the management of affairs than they? But the truth is, none of them, no not one of them shall, or do, or can understand; that is, they understand not the work of Christ, the business and design that he hath in hand; nor what is the true and proper interest of them who are concerned in these dispensations. There are many ways whereby Christ exerts this blinding and infatigating efficacy of his providence towards wicked men in such a day of judgment, that they shall not understand, or know, that he is at all concerned in the works that are in the world.

Sometimes the very things that he doth, are such, and so contrary to the prejudicate opinions of men, that they can never understand that they are things which he will own. How many have been kept from understanding any thing of Christ in the world, in the days wherein we live, from their inveterate prejudices, on the account of old superstitions, and forms of government which have been removed; they will rather die, than believe that Christ hath any hand in these things: *They shall not understand.*

Sometimes the persons by whom he doth them, keep them from understanding. Shall these men save us? These whom they look upon as the off-scouring of the earth? Sure if Christ had any work to do in the world, he would make use of other manner of instruments for the accomplishing of them: they are no less offended with the persons that do them, than the things that are done. Christ worketh all this that they should not understand.

Sometimes the manner of doing what he hath to do, the darkness wherewith it is attended, the strange process that he makes, sometimes weak, sometimes foolish, sometimes disorderly to the reasoning of flesh and blood, tho' all beautiful in it self, and in relation to him.

And sometimes Christ sends a spirit of giddiness into the midst of them, that they shall err and wander in all their ways, and not see nor discern the things that are before them. *None of the wicked shall understand.*

By these, and many such ways as these, doth Christ in these days of his coming exercise judgment on ungodly men: not to mention the outward destruction, desolation, and perdition, which usually in such seasons he brings upon them.

(4.) He exerciseth judgment at such a time, even among the saints themselves, *Psal.* lxxxii. 1. he is judging in the great congregation. So *Psal.* l. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. All this solemnity of proceeding is for the judgment of his own people. And his judging of them is in a plea about their obedience and failing therein. The sum of this his dealing with them is expressed, *Rev.* iii. 9.

We may then consider, [1.] What it is that Christ pleadeth with his own people about at his coming. [2.] What are the ways and means whereby he doth so.

[1.] There are sundry things on the account whereof Christ at his coming pleads with his saints, one or more of them.

1.) On the account of some secret lusts that have defiled them, and which they have either indulged themselves in, or not so vigorously opposed as their loyalty unto Christ required. Times of peace and outward prosperity are usually times, wherein, through manifold temptations, even the saints themselves are apt to fully their consciences, and to have breaches made upon their integrity: sometimes in things they do know, and sometimes in things they do not know, nor take notice of. Instances may be given in abundance of such things. In this condition Christ deals with them as *Isa.* iv. 4. there is blood and filth upon them; the spirit of judgment and burning must be set at work, which as it principally aims at the internal efficacy of the spirit in the cleansing of sin, so it respects a time of providential alterations and trials, wherein that work is effectually exerted. Christ in these dispensations speaks secretly to the consciences of his saints, and minds them of this and that folly and miscarriage, and deals with them about it. He asks them if things be not so and so with them? If they have not thus and thus defiled themselves? Whether these hearts are fit to converse with him? And leaves not until their dross and tin be consumed.

2.) On the account of some way or ways wherein they may have been unadvisedly, or through temptation, or want of seeking counsel aright from him, engaged. They may be got, in their employments, in their callings, in the work that lies before them in this world, into ways and paths wherein Christ is not pleased they should make any progress: what through leaning to their own understandings, what through an inclination of saying a *confederacy* to them, to whom the people say a *confederacy*, what through the common mistakes in the days wherein they live, even the saints may be engaged in ways that are not according to the mind and will of Christ. Now in such a day of Christ's coming, tho' he spares the souls of his saints, and forgives them, yet he *takes vengeance of their inventions*, *Psal.* xcix. 8. He will cast down all their idols, and destroy and consume every false way wherein they were: one is, it may be, in a way of superstition and false worship; another in a way of pride and ambition; another in a way of giving countenance to the men of the world, and things wherein God delights not. Christ will take vengeance of all these their inventions in the day of his coming; he sits as a *refiner's fire, and as fuller's soap*.

3.) On the account of inordinate cleaving unto the shaken, passing things of the world. This is a peculiar controversy that Christ hath with his, upon the account of adherence to the passing world; and it is a thing wherein, when he comes, too many will be found faulty. I might also insist on their unbelief, and other particulars; but

[2.] The ways and means whereby Christ judgeth and pleadeth with his own on these accounts, are also various.

1.) He doth it by the afflictions, trials, and troubles that he exerciseth them with at his coming. The use of the furnace is to take away dross; and the issue of afflictions and trials, to take away sin: this is their fruit. So *Dan.* xii. 1. The time of Christ's coming shall be a day of trouble, such as never was. And what shall be the issue? *ver.* 10. *Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried.* Their trials and troubles, their great tribulations shall be purifying and cleansing; though the design of Christ in the issue at the appointed season, be the peace and deliverance of his saints, yet in the carrying on of his work, great trials and tribulations may befall them all; and many may fall in the way, and perish as to the outward man. Hence *Dan.* xii. 13. there is an appointed *time of rest*; and it will be a blessed thing for them that shall

be preserved unto it; but whilst those days and seasons are coming to their period, there is often *a time of great trouble*, ver. 1. And *the power of the holy people* may be *scattered*, ver. 7. and many afflictions and trials may befall them. Now by these doth Christ plead with his for the consumption of their lusts, and the destruction of their inventions, for the purging and purifying of them. All our trials, pressures, troubles, disappointments in such a day, are the actings of Christ to this end and purpose. The influences that affliction hath unto these ends, are commonly spoken unto.

2.) He doth it by pouring out of his spirit in a singular manner, for this end and purpose, so to plead with, judge, and cleanse his saints. It is in the administration of his spirit that at his coming *he sits as a refiner and purifier of silver*, *Mal. iii. 1, 2, 3.* and we see what work he accomplishes thereby. The Holy Ghost, who is the great pleader for the saints, and in them, doth at such a time effectually plead with them, by convictions, persuasions, arguings, application of the word, motions, strivings, and the like. Hence those who are unrefined at such a season, are said in a peculiar manner *to vex*, to grieve *the holy spirit* of God, *Isa. lxiii. 10.* His design upon them, is a design of love; and to be rejected, resisted, opposed in his actings and motions, this grieves and vexes him. Men know not what they do in neglecting the actings of the Holy Ghost, which are peculiarly suited to providential dispensations. When God is great in the world in the works of his providence, in alterations, dissolutions, shakings, changings, removals, and sends his spirit to move and work in the hearts of men, answerable to his mind and will in these dispensations; so that there is an harmony in the voice of God without and within, both speaking aloud and clearly; then to neglect the workings of the spirit, brings men into that condition complained of, *Ezek. xxiv. 13. Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged any more.*

It may be observed, that at such seasons when Christ hath any great and signal work to bring forth in the world, he doth by his spirit deal with the hearts and consciences of the most wicked and vile men; which, when the secrets of all hearts shall be discovered at the last day, will exceedingly exalt the glory of his wisdom, patience, goodness, holiness, and righteousness. So did he with them before the flood, as is evident from *Gen. vi. 3.* When an utter destruction was to come, he saith, *his spirit shall strive with them no more*; that is, about their sin and rebellion. That this spirit was the spirit of Christ, and that the work of dealing with these ungodly men, was the work of Christ, and that it was a fruit of long-suffering, *Peter* declares, *1 Ep. iii. 18, 19, 20.* And if he deals thus with a perishing world, by a work that perisheth also; how much more doth he it in an effectual work upon the hearts of his own? It is the spirit that speaks to the Churches in all their trials, *Rev. ii.*

By this means, I say then, Christ pleads with his saints, secretly and powerfully judging their lusts, corruptions, failings, consuming and burning them up: he first by frequent motions and instructions gives them no rest in any unequal path; then discovers to them the beauty of holiness, the excellency of the love of Christ, the vanity and folly of every thing that hath interrupted their communion with him, and so fills them with godly sorrow, renunciation of sin, and cleaving unto God; which is the very promise that we have, *Ezek. vi. 10.*

3.) As he doth it by the inward, private, effectual operation of his spirit; so he doth it by the effusion of his light and gifts in the dispensation of the word. Christ seldom brings any great alteration upon the world, but together with it, or to prepare for it, he causeth much effectual light to break forth in the dispensation of his word. Before the first destruction of *Jerusalem* by the *Babylonians*, how he dealt with them he declares, *2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place.* And before the final dissolution of the heavens and earth of that church and state, he preached to them himself in the flesh. A glorious light! Before the ruin of the antichristian world, he sends the angel with the everlasting Gospel, and his two witnesses to hold forth the light of the Gospel: and we must witness to this his way and wisdom in our generation. Now though there are many rebels against light, and many whose lusts are enraged by the breaking forth of truth in its beauty and lustre; and many that being dazzled with it, do run out

of its paths into ways of error and folly, and none of the wicked do understand; yet among the saints, the more light, the more holiness; for their light is transforming. This then is another means whereby, in such a day, Christ consumes the lusts, and judges the inordinate walking of his own, even by the light which in an eminent manner he sends forth in the dispensation of the word.

Now if the time and season whereof we speak, be such a day of judgment, wherein Christ thus pleads with all men, and with his own in an especial manner; I think the inference unto eminency in universal holiness, may be left upon the thoughts and minds of all that are concerned: especially from these considerations doth the inference lye strong unto the ensuing particulars, in the ways of holiness and godliness: *First*, Of self-searching, and self-judging in reference to our state and condition. Dreadful are the actings of Christ in such a day on the souls and consciences, oftimes on the names and lives of corrupt, unsound professors: in part I declared them before. If any now should be found in such a condition, his day of judgment is come, his scaling to destruction. This the Apostle calls to in such a dispensation, 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32. Self-judging, as to our state and condition, ways and practices, is a great principle of holy conversation and godliness. When Christ comes to judge, we ought surely to judge our selves; and abounding in that work is a great means of preservation from the temptations of the days whereunto we are exposed. *Secondly*, Of weanedness from the world and the things thereof. Christ's coming puts vanity on all these passing things. This is surely contained in the text; *Seeing that these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons, &c.* At best they are vain and passing uncertain things; in such a dispensation as is spoken of, they are all obnoxious to dissolution, and many of them certainly to be removed and taken away. And why should the heart of any one be set upon them? Why should we not fix our souls on things more profitable, more durable. It is no small matter to meet the Lord Christ at his coming, *Mal. iii. 1, 2, 3.* They were all full of desires of the coming of Christ; they sought after him: *The Lord whom ye seek.* They delighted in the thoughts of him: *Whom ye delight in.* Well, he came according to their desires; he whom they sought was found. And what was the issue? Why very few of them would abide the day of his coming, or stand when he appeared. He had a work to do they could not away with. They desired his coming; they desired the day of the Lord; but as the Prophet says, *Amos v. 18. Wo unto them, to what end have they desired it? it was darkness to them, not light.* That was the coming of Christ in person to his temple; it is not otherwise in any of his other comings in providential dispensations. Many men long for it, delight in it; it is our duty so to do: but what is the issue? One is hardened in sin and lust; another is lifted up as tho' himself were something, when he is nothing; a third stumbles at the coming it self, and falls; *Wo unto them, the day of the Lord is darkness unto them, and not light.*

I proceed now to the *Use*. But to make way for the due improvement of the Apostle's exhortation unto us, some previous considerations must be laid down.

First, It is known to all the world, that we have had great providential alterations and dissolutions in these nations. He must be a stranger, not in *England* only, but in *Europe*, almost in the whole world that knows it not. Our heavens and our earth, our sea and our dry land have been not only shaken, but removed also. The heavens of ancient and glorious fabrick, both civil and ecclesiastical, have been taken down by fire and sword, and the fervent heat of God's displeasure. It is needless for me to declare, what destructions, what dissolutions, what unparallel'd alterations we have had in these nations: persons, things, forms of government of old established, and newly framed constitutions, we have seen all obnoxious to change or ruin.

Secondly, It is no less certain, that we may say concerning all these things, *Come and see what God hath wrought.* And as to these desolations of nations, ruin of families, alterations of governments, we may say of them all as the Psalmist, *Psal. xlv. 8. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.* It is his work, he hath done it himself: *There is no evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it,* *Amos iii. 6.* Have there been any exaltations of men, recoveries from depression, relief of the oppressed, establishments of new frames and order of things? It hath been all from him, *Dan. ii. 21. chap. iv. 32.* Indeed the days wherein we live, are full of practical atheism; some out of mere stoutness of heart and in-

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nate unbelief will take no notice of God in all these things, *Psal. x. 4. The wicked through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.* As things have been, so they suppose they are, and will be; but as to the consideration of him who disposeth of all as seems good unto him, they are strangers unto it. Some have had their lusts enraged, and themselves so provoked and disappointed, that flying upon the instruments which God hath used, they have been filled with prejudice, and utterly blinded as to any discovery of the ways or work of God in these revolutions. Some have been utterly cast down in their thoughts, because they have not been able to discover the righteousness, beauty, and order of the ways of God, his footsteps having been in the deep, while his paths have not been known. And some having found an open door for the satisfaction of their lusts, pride, covetousness, ambition, love of the world, reputation, vain-glory, and uncleanness; have been so greedily engaged in the pursuit of them, that they have taken little or no notice of the hand of God in these things. And others are at a stand like the *philistine* priests and diviners, *1 Sam. vi. 9.* They know not whether all this hath been from the hand of God, or whether some chance hath befallen us. I shall not need to mention those in *Isa. xlvii. 13.* astrologers, star-gazers, and monthly prognosticators, who have endeavoured also to divert the thoughts of unbelieving, foolish men, from a due consideration of the author of all our revolutions. To all which I shall answer in general in the words of *Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.* God hath done all these things; and men that will not take notice of him, and his proceedings, shall at length be forced so to do, *Isa. xxvi. 11.*

These things being premised; one principal enquiry, which must be the bottom and foundation of the ensuing directions, is, whether it may appear that these providential alterations and dissolutions have related to Christ and his interest in the world in an especial manner.

That we may yet a little farther clear our way, you may farther observe, what I intend, by *relating* unto Christ and his Church in an especial manner.

1. Whereas the Lord Christ is by the appointment of the Father *made heir of all things*, *Heb. i. 2.* and *hath all judgment committed unto him*, over all flesh, in all the world; which include his right to send his Gospel into what nation and place he pleaseth: so all the alterations that are in the world, all things relate to him, and do lye in a remote tendency to the advancement of his glory. He will work out his own glorious ends from all the breakings of all the nations in the world; even where the interest of his Gospel seems outwardly to be very little or nothing at all. But it is not in this sense that we make our enquiry; for so there would be nothing peculiar in the works that have been among us.

2. Things may relate unto Christ and his Church, upon the account of special promise. Christ hath a special and peculiar concernment in providential dissolutions, when they so relate to him; and that appears in these things:

(1.) When the judgments that are exercised in such a dispensation, flow from provocations given unto the Lord Christ, upon the account of his Church. So *Isa. xxxiv. 8.* All the dissolutions mentioned of the heavens and the earth, *ver. 4.* were on *Zion's* account; and the controversy that Christ had with *Idumea* about her. So *chap. lxi. 4.* the day of vengeance, is the year of the redeemed. Whence in such a day, the saints themselves are stirred up to take notice, that the desolations wrought in the earth, are on their account, *Jer. li. 35.* and so it is fully expressed in the ruin of antichristian *Babylon* in the *Revelations*: where then there is a peculiar relation of any dissolving providence unto Christ and his Church, the judgments exerted in and under it, regard the vengeance of the Church, and proceed from the provocations of Christ on that account.

(2.) Some promises made unto Christ concerning his inheritance; some promises of Christ unto his Church are in such a day brought forth unto accomplishment. The promises of Christ to the Church are of two sorts: *First*, General, essential to the new covenant: and these belong equally to all saints, of all ages, in all places, not to one more than another. Every saint hath an equal right and interest in the essential promises of the covenant with any other saint whatever; there is no difference, but one God, Lord, and Father of all, is good unto them all alike. And, *Secondly*, There are promises which are peculiarly suited to the several states and conditions into which the visible kingdom of Christ is in his wisdom to be brought in several ages. Such

are the promises of the calling of the *Jews*, of the destruction of antichrist, of the increase of light in the latter days, of the peace, rest, and prosperity of the Church in some times or ages, after trials and tribulation. Now they are the promises of this latter sort, that relate unto providential dispensations.

Having premised these things, I shall now briefly offer some grounds of hope, that such have been the alterations and dissolutions wherein we have been exercised in this generation.

First, Because very many of the saints of God have obtained real, evident, soul refreshing communion with Christ in and about these things, on this foundation, that the things on the wheel amongst us have had a peculiar relation unto him. There is nothing of more certainty to the souls of any, than what they have real, spiritual experience of. When the things about which they are conversant lye only in notion, and are rationally discoursed or debated, much deceit may lye under all. But when things between God and the soul come to be realized, by practical experience, they give a never failing certainty of themselves. Now by holding communion about these things with Christ, I understand the exercise of faith, love, hope, expectation, delight on and in Christ on the one hand, and the receiving relief, supportment, consolation, joy, patience, perseverance on the other: from both which, holiness, faithfulness, and thankfulness have proceeded, and been increased. Now this communion with Christ, in and about the works of his providence amongst us, very many of the saints have obtained; and, which is the height and complement of it, died in the clear visions of Christ in such communion. Now there are two things that offer sufficient security against any deceit or mistake in this thing.

1. The goodness, care and faithfulness of God towards his own, which will not suffer us to fear that he would lead all his people into such a temptation, wherein, in their chiefest communion, as they apprehended, with himself, they should feed on the wind and delusion. If the foundation of all this intercourse with God, was false, and not according to his mind, then so was the whole superstructure. Now that God for many years should lead his people into a way of prayer, faith, hope, thankfulness, and yet all false and an abominable thing, because all leaning on a false ground and supposition, none that consider his goodness and tender pity towards his own, with the delight of his soul in their worship and ways, can once imagine. It is true, men may be zealously engaged in ways and acts of worship, and that all their lives, wherein they think they do God good service; and yet both they and their service be abominated by him for ever. But men cannot do so in faith, love, obedience, thankfulness, which alone we speak of. At least, he will not suffer his saints to do so, of whom alone we speak. We have then the tender mercies and faithfulness of God to assure us in this case.

2. The self-evidencing efficacy of faith in spiritual experiences strengthens their persuasion. Many doubtless may persuade themselves that they have communion with God, and yet feed upon ashes; and a deceived heart turns them aside. The principle of such a delusion, I shall not now lay open. But when it is indeed obtain'd by faith, it is always accompanied with a soul quieting, refreshing evidence; for faith in its operation, will evince itself to the soul where it is. I do not say, it always doth so. It may be so clouded with darkness of mind; so overpower'd by temptations, that in its most spiritual and genuine acting, it may be hid from the soul wherein it is, which we find to be the condition of many a gracious soul; but in its self, it clears up its own actings. Things that have a self-evidencing power, may be hindered from exerting it; but when they do exert it, it is evident. Put a candle under a bushel, it cannot be seen; but take away the hindrance, and it manifests itself. It is so in faith, and its actings. They may be so clouded to the soul itself in which they act; that it may not be able to attain any comforting evidence of it. But take away the bushel, fear, prejudices, temptations, corrupt reasonings, and it will assure the soul of its self and its working. Neither is its working more evident than its fruit, or the product of its operations in the soul; it brings forth love, rest, peace, all with a spiritual sense upon the heart and spirit. Now these have been in this thing so evident in the souls of the saints, that they have bespoken that faith which cannot deceive nor be deceived.

The bottom then of the communion which the saints had with Christ in this work, and have, must either be faith or fancy: if faith, then the communion was and is

real, and the work true that it is built upon. That it was not, that it is not the fancy or imagination of a deluded heart, may appear from these considerations:

(1.) From its extent. We know it possessed the minds of the universality of believers in this nation, who were not, nor are at this day combined in our political interest, but are wofully divided among themselves; yet have all had, more or less, this persuasion of the work relating unto Christ. Now that this should be any corrupt imagination, seems to me impossible. I speak not of outward actions and proceedings; for so, I know whole nations may politically combine in evil; though I will not believe, that ever the generality of the saints of Christ shall do so. But I speak of the frame of their hearts and spirits as to communion with Christ in faith and love, whereunto no outward reasonings or Interests could influence them in the least: *Digitus Dei est hoc.*

(2.) It appears from the permanency, and flourishing of this principle in streights and difficulties. A corrupt imagination, be it never so strong and vigorous in its season, and whilst its food is administered to it, in the temptation it lives upon; yet in trials, great and pressing, it sinks and withers; or if the difficulty continue, for the most part, unless, where it falls on some natures of an unconquerable pertinacy, utterly vanisheth. But now, this principle of the saints communion with Christ about the work of our generation, was never more active, vigorous, and flourishing, did never more evidence itself to be of a divine extract, than in the greatest streights and difficulties, in the mouth and entrance of the greatest deaths. Then did it commonly rise up to its greatest heights and assurance. Our temptations, whether Christ be in this work or no, have, for the most part, befallen us since we had deliverance from pressing, bloody troubles. And I think I may say, that there are very many saints in these nations, who can truly say, that the best and the most comfortable days that ever they saw in their lives, were those wherein they were exercised with the greatest fears, dangers and troubles, and that upon the account of the strengthening of this principle of communion with Christ. And in very many hath it been tried out to the death, when corrupt fancies were of little worth.

(3.) It appears from the fruits of this persuasion. Every corrupt imagination and fancy is of the flesh; and the works of the flesh are manifest. Whatever it may do in conjunction with convictions and for a season, yet in itself, and in a course it will bring forth no fruit, but what tends to the satisfaction of the flesh. But now the principle under consideration, did bring forth fruits unto God; in godliness and righteousness.

But you will say, do we not see what fruit it hath brought forth? Is not the land full of the steam of the lusts of men engaged in the work of this age? Can hell itself afford a worse savour than is sent forth by many of them?

Ans. 1. Very many who have been engaged, never pretended to ought of this principle, but followed professedly on carnal, at best rational and humane accounts solely. Now these being men of the world, and being fallen into days of notable temptations, no wonder if their lusts work and tumultuate, and that to purpose. The principle is not to suffer for their miscarriages who renounce it.

Ans. 2. There was a mixed multitude which in this business went up with the people of God, who pretended to this principle indeed, and talked, and spake of the interest of Christ; but knowing nothing of the power of it, when these men were brought into the wilderness, and there met with provocations on the one hand, and temptations on the other, they fell a lusting, and indeed they have pursued and acted their lusts to purpose also, which have been indeed the more abominable; in that some of them have still the impudence to pretend this principle of faith as to the interest of Christ, which teacheth no such things, nor produceth any such fruits as they abound withal.

Ans. 3. Many who have really the power of this principle in them, have yet been overpower'd by temptations, and have brought forth fruits directly opposite unto that obedience, and holiness, and self-denial, which the principle spoken of tends unto. This, for the most part, hath fallen out since deliverance came in, and so the vigour of faith, raised by daily exercise, was much decayed. None therefore of these things can be charged on the principle itself, whose natural, genuine effects we have experienced to be such as no corrupt fancy, or imagination could produce.

Many other reasons of this nature might be insisted on; but this is my first ground.

Secondly,

Secondly, Because in this, much work hath been really done for Christ. Whatever have been the designs of any, or all of the sons of men, Christ hath done so much for himself, as I can from thence with confidence conclude, that the whole hath related unto him. Indeed in the work he doth, his interest oftentimes lies very much in the dark, yea, is utterly hid from the instruments he employs. Little did the *Medes* and *Persians* think, in the destruction of *Babylon*, that they were executing the vengeance of *Zion*, and the blood of *Jerusalem*, a poor city ruined sixty or seventy years before. And when the *Romans* destroyed *Jerusalem*, little did they think whose work they had in hand. And whatever instruments thought or intended, Christ hath done notable work for himself. The destruction, of false worship as established by a law, the casting down of combinations for persecution, are no small works. I say, much work hath been done for Christ. There was a generation of men that were risen to a strange height in the contempt of the Spirit, and ways of Christ, combined in a resolution to oppose and persecute all the appearance of him either by light or holiness in his saints, setting up an outside, formal worship, in opposition unto the spiritual worship of the Gospel. And upon the account of the light and truth which he began to command forth in those days, an unspeakable aggravation attended their guilt; in the pursuit of whose design, some were imprisoned, some banished into the ends of the earth, some begger'd, many ruined, and given up to death it self. Now what work hath Christ made in these days on the men of that generation? What vengeance hath he taken on them? This is certain, not to insist on particulars, that whatever new sort or combination of men may rise up in their spirit and design, and whatever success they may obtain, yet the generality of the men of that provocation, at least, the heads and rulers of it, are already sealed up under the indignation of the Lord *Jesus*, and the vengeance he takes for *Zion*. I shall not insist on more particulars; the wasting and destruction of the most eminent persecutors of the saints, the ruin and destruction of civil and ecclesiastical fabricks and combinations of men, designing the opposing and persecuting of the Spirit of Christ, the removal of all that false worship under the pretence whereof they persecuted all the spiritual appearances of Christ, hath been all work done for him.

Thirdly, The breaking forth of much glorious gospel light under this dispensation, evinces its relation unto Christ. Look upon the like outward work at any other time in the world. What is the issue of war, blood, confusion? Is it not darkness, ignorance, blindness, barrenness? Hath it not been so in other places of the world? But now in the coming forth of Christ, though he hath a sword in one hand, yet he hath the sun in the other; though he cause darkness in the destruction and desolation that attend his vengeance, yet he gives light and faith to his saints, *Mal. iv. 1, 2.* Christ never comes for vengeance only; his chief design is love. Love brings forth light; and that which reveals him more to his saints, and which endears his saints more to him. But I have manifested before, that he brings light with him; and he hath done so in this dispensation. Light as to the mysteries of the Gospel; light as to the riches of his grace; light as to the way of his worship, of his ordinances and institutions, hath broken out amongst us. As *Dan. xii. 4.* It is such a day he speaks of.

I know how obnoxious this observation is to a sad *objection*. Call you these days of light, and knowledge? Say you that truth hath shined forth, or been diffused? Is it increased, or more scattered abroad? Is not the contrary true?

Answer. It cannot be denied, but that many grievous and enormous abominations have been broached in these times under the name and pretence of light and truth. But is that singular to these days? Hath it not been so upon every appearance of Christ? As the light hath been, so hath been the pretence of it in error and darkness. No sooner was Christ come in the flesh, but instantly there were many false Christs: Lo, here is Christ and there is Christ, was common language in those days; as, This is the only way, and that is the only way, is now; and yet the true Christ was in the world. And whatever light at any time comes forth, some mock; false light about the same thing immediately breaks forth. So was it in the first spreading of the Gospel; so in the late reformation, and so in our days; and this is no evidence against the coming of Christ, but rather for it. For,

1. Satan pours out this flood of abominations, on purpose to bring an ill report upon the truth and light that is sent out by Christ. The great prejudice against truth in

in the world is, that it is new. *He seems to be a setter forth of strange or new Gods*, say they, of *Paul*; because he preached *Jesus*, and the resurrection. To encrease this prejudice, the Devil with it or after it sends forth his darkness; which, first, enables the world to load the truth it self with reproaches, whilst it comes accompanied with such follies, as though it also were of the number. Secondly, It disables weak friends to find out and close with the truth amidst so many false pretenders. Where much false money is abroad in the world, every man cannot discern, and receive only that which is good. Much less will men always keep safe, when they are so unstable, and uncertain, as they are for the most part about choosing of truth.

2. God permits it so to be,

(1.) For the trial of careless professors. There must be heresies, that the approved may be tried. Most men are apt to content themselves with a lazy profession. They will hold to the truth whilst nothing appears but truth. Let error come with the same pretences and advantage, they are for that also. Now God delights to judge such persons even in this world; to manifest that they are not of the truth, that they never received it in the love thereof. And he sifts and tries the elect by it, and that for many advantages, not now to be insisted on. As, first, that they may experiment the efficacy of truth: Secondly, His power in their preservation: Thirdly, That they may hold truth upon firm and abiding grounds.

(2.) God permits it to set a greater lustre and esteem upon truth. Truth when it is sought after, when it is contended for, when it is experimented in its power and efficacy, is rendred glorious and beautiful; and all these with innumerable other advantages it hath by the competition that is set up against it by error. When men keep to the truth by the power of God, and the sense of its sweetness and usefulness to their own souls, and shall see some by their errors turned aside to one abomination, some to another, some made to wither by them and under them, they discern the excellency of the truth they embrace. So that notwithstanding this exception, the observation stands good.

Fourthly, It appears from the general nature of the dispensation itself, which clearly answers the predictions that are of the great works to be accomplished in the latter days, upon the account of Christ and his Church. This is a general head, whose particulars I shall not enter into. They cannot be managed without a consideration of all, at least, of the most principal prophecies of the last times, and of the kingdom of Christ as to its enlargement, beauty and glory in them; too large a task for me to enter upon at present.

And these are some of the grounds on which I am persuaded, that the alterations and providential dissolutions of these days, have related unto, and do lye in a subserviency to the interest of Christ and his Church; whatever be the issue of the individual persons who have been engaged therein.

Come we now to the *Uses*.

S E R M O N X.

Use 1. **O**F trial or examination.

Hath Christ for many years now been in an especial manner come amongst us? Do these alterations relate to him and his interest; and so require universal holiness and godliness? Let us then in the first place see, whether in their several stations the men of this generation have walked answerable to such a dispensation. Christ indeed hath done his work; but have we done ours? He hath destroyed many of his enemies, judged false professors, hardened and blinded the wicked world, sent out his Spirit to plead with his people, and taken vengeance on their inventions, he hath given out plentiful measures of truth and light: but now the whole

enquiry is, whether all or any of us have answered the mind of Christ in these dispensations, and prepared ourselves to meet him as becometh his greatness and holiness?

For the generality of the people of the nation, Christ hath been pleading with them about their unbelief, worldliness, atheism, and contempt of the Gospel. And what hath been the issue? Alas! he that was filthy is filthy still; he that was profane is so still; swearers, drunkards, and other vicious persons are so still. Where is that man in a thousand in the nation, that takes notice of any peculiar plea of Christ with him about his sin, in any of these dispensations? One cries out of one party of men, another curses another party, a third is angry with God himself; but as to the call of Christ in his mighty appearances, who almost takes any notice of it? The abominable pride, folly, vanity, luxury that are found in this city, testify to their faces, that the voice of wisdom is not heard in the cry of fools. And whereas Christ's peculiar controversy with this nation hath been about the contempt of the Gospel; is there any ground got upon the generality of men? Is any reformation wrought on this account among them? Nay, may we not say freely, that there is a greater spirit of hatred, enmity, and opposition to Christ, and the Gospel risen up in the nation than ever before? Light hath provoked and enraged them, so that they hate the Gospel more than ever. How mad are the generality of the people on and after their idols, their old superstitious ways of worship which Christ hath witnessed against? What an enmity against the very doctrine of the Gospel? What a combination in all places is there against the reforming dispensation of it? And is this any good omen of a comfortable issue of this dispensation? Is not Christ ready to say of such a people, *Why should you be smitten any more, you will revolt more and more?* and to swear in his wrath, that *they shall not enter into his rest?* Nay, may he not justly take his Gospel from us, and give it to a people that will bring forth fruit? O *England*, that in this thy day, thou hadst known the things of thy peace! I fear they will be hidden from thee. The temptations of the day, the divisions of thy teachers, with other their miscarriages, and thine own lusts have deceived thee, and without mercy, insuperable mercy, will ruin thee. Shall this shame be thy glory that Christ hath not conquered thee, that thou hast hardened thy self against him?

But passing them let us enquire, whether the mind of Christ hath in these dispensations been answered in a due manner by the saints themselves? Have they made it their business to meet him in all holy conversation and godliness? Indeed to me, the contrary appears upon these considerations. (1.) Their great differences among themselves about lesser things. (2.) Their little difference from the world in great things. (3.) The general miscarriage of them all, in things prejudicial to the progress of the Gospel. (4.) The particular deviation of some into ways of scandal and offence. (5.) The backsliding of most if not of all of them.

(1.) Consider their great differences among themselves about lesser things. I cannot insist on the weight that is laid by our Saviour on the union of his Disciples; with the condescension and love which he requires of them to that purpose; the motives and exhortations given by the Holy Ghost unto them on that account; the provision of principles and means made in the Gospel for it; the necessity of it to the promotion of the interest of Christ in the world; the benefit and advantage of it to the saints themselves; the testimony given by it to the power of Christ, and truth of his word; the blasphemies and woful soul-ruining offences that ensue on the contrary frame; the weakning of faith, hindrance of prayer, quenching of zeal, strengthening of the men of the world, that attend the neglect of it: I must not, I say, insist on these things; but see *Joh. xvii. 21, 23.* and *Philipp. ii. 1, 2, 3.* of an hundred places that might be mentioned; how little the mind of Christ, and his expectation at his coming hath been answered by his saints in this particular, is evident unto all.

[1.] Who is there almost who having got any private opinion, true or false, wherein he differs from all or any of his brethren, who is not ready to proclaim it, without due regard to scandal and division, and even to quarrel with and divide from all that will not think as he thinks, and speak as he speaks? Now the pride, selfishness, vanity of mind, unlikeness to Christ, folly, want of faith and love that is in such a frame can never be expressed, nor sufficiently lamented. Christ abhors such a frame of spirit, as he doth the pollution of the world.

[2.] Neither

[2.] Neither is this all; but men will lay more weight on their *mint and cummin*, on the lesser things, wherein they differ from their brethren, spend more time about them, write more books of them, labour more in their prosecution, than they will do in and about the weighty things of law and Gospel; all which will appear at length to have been but the laying of hay and stubble on the foundation, that must be consumed.

[3.] And farther; men fall to judging and censuring each other, as to their interest in Christ, or their eternal condition. By what rule? the everlasting Gospel? the covenant of grace? no; but of the Disciples: *Master, they follow not with us.* They that believe not our opinion, we are apt to think believe not in Jesus Christ; and because we delight not in them, that Christ does not delight in them. This digs up the roots of love, weakens prayer, encreases evil surmises, which are of the works of the flesh, gender strife, and contempt; things that the soul of Christ abhors.

[4.] The abomination of this wickedness ends not here; persecution, banishment, the blood of one another hath on this account lain in the hearts and minds of some of the saints themselves: not only have expressions to that purpose broken out from particular men; but it is to be feared, that designs for it have been managed by parties and combinations. And are they not ready to dress up one another with such names and titles as may fit them for ruin? Sectaries, hereticks, schismatics on the one side; priests, antichristian dogs on the other: and all this while Christ is in the midst of us! And doth this answer the expectation of Christ? Is this a preparation to meet him in all holy conversation and godliness? Can we render ourselves more unlike him, more unmeet for communion with him? Are not saints ready to join with the world against saints? To take the vilest men into their bosom, that will close with them in defaming, deriding, or it may be, destroying their brethren? Doth Christ look for this usage in the house of his friends?

(2.) Consider their little difference from the world in great things. The great separation that Christ requires and commands of his saints, is, from the world: he died to redeem them from it, and out of it; to deliver them from the present evil world, the ways, works, fellowship, and ends of it; so providing, that in all holy conversation his people should dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations.

Now there are five things wherein Christ calls for his own to be differenced from the world, and the men thereof. [1.] In spirit. [2.] In principle. [3.] In conversation. [4.] In ends. [5.] In worship.

[1.] In spirit. He tells us every where, that it is one spirit that is in his, another that is in the world, 1 Joh. iv. 4. *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* There is an *he* in you, and an *he* in the world, and they are different and opposite. There is dwelling in you the spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive, nor doth it know him, Joh. xiv. 17. And when his Disciples began to act in the power of a carnal spirit, he tells them, they *knew not what spirit they were of.*

[2.] In principle. The principle that Christ requires in his saints, is faith working by love, and guided by that wisdom which is from above, 1 Tim. i. 5. Here are the saints principles, I mean, should be so of all their operations. A pure heart and love, which is the end of all faith, is their great principle; this cleanses the conscience, and so sets them on work; by this they take in strength for operation from Christ, without whom they can do nothing, Joh. xv. 5. By this they receive light and guidance from Christ, and that wisdom which is from above, enabling them to order their affairs with discretion, Jam. iii. 17, 18. Now the principle that is in the world, is self, self acted and guided by carnal wisdom, which is sensual and devilish; on the account whereof, they despise the principle and actions of the saints, Psal. xiv. 6.

[3.] In conversation. He *hath redeemed us from a vain conversation*, 1 Pet. i. 18. There is a peculiar emphasis put upon a conversation that becomes the Gospel. There is a twofold conversation; one that becometh the world, and the men of the world; another that becometh the Gospel, and the profession thereof: that these be kept unmixed is the great exhortation of the Apostle, Rom. xii. 2. And if you would know wherein a worldly conversation consists, the Apostle telleth us, 1 Joh. ii. 16. A conversation wherein any of these things bear sway, is a conversation of this world. That all holiness, all manner of holiness, universal holiness and godliness is in the Gospel conversation to which the saints are called, shall be afterwards spoken unto.

[4.] In

[4.] In ends. There is a double end of mens working and acting in this world: 1.) General, which regulates the course of their lives and conversations: 2.) Particular, which regulates their particular actings and works: and in both these are the saints and the world differenced.

1.) The general end of the saints is the glory of God; this lies in their eye, in their design; how God may be glorified by them, his name exalted, his interest promoted; this way the bent of their minds and spirits tend. The general end of the men of the world is self; all is resolved into self; whatever they do or act in publick or private, whatever their pretence be, yet self is their end; self-admiration, self-ostentation, self-satisfaction, all centers in self: sometimes indeed they may perform things that seem to be of a publick tendency, for the good of mankind, the good of nations, yea, it may be the good of the Church; so that it is hard for themselves to discover, or for others to charge them, it may be, that they act for self. But there are these two things that will evince men to make self their general end and aim, even then when they act for publick ends.

(1. This is a rule that will not fail men: whatever in publick actings is not done with a single eye for the glory of God, is done for self. These two divide all the general ends of men; and where one is not enthroned, the other is. Now though some men may so far proceed in publick actings, that it may not be evident wherein their self-interest lies, though that also be but seldom, yet if they do not eye the glory of God with a single eye in these their actings, it is all for self, and so it will be found at the last day. Now how few will be left not turning into self on this rule, now pretences run so high of publick aims, might be easily evinced. It were no hard matter to discover, how in things of a publick tendency, men make some fleshly imagination or other the God they worship; so that be enthroned, they are little solicitous about the glory of God himself.

(2. The difference of these ends even in publick actings may be seen from the ways, means, and frame of spirit in which they are carried on. Let men pretend what they will to publick ends, yet if they press after them with a proud, carnal, wrathful, envious, spirit, by the ways, wisdom, and in the spirit of the world, without faith and submission to God, it is self and not God that is their aim. And this also might be improved to strip men of glorying in their publick designs, were that my present business. *Jehu's* spirit spoiled his work.

2.) There is a particular end that regulates the publick actings of men. This in the saints is their doing the work of their generation; that, as *Noah*, they may walk with God in their generation. This is their integrity as to the special course of their lives, and their particular employment, how they may fulfil the work of their generation. The special end of the men of the world, is the satisfaction of one particular lust or other. Will this encrease my wealth, my power, my carnal interest in this world, my reputation for wisdom and ability, or give me advantage to grow in this or that corrupt end, in particular? This is the secret enquiry of their deceived hearts; this influences and regulates all their particular actings.

[5.] As to their separation in worship, I shall only point to that one place, and leave it, 2 *Cor.* vi. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. and *chap.* vii. 1. which belongs to that discourse.

Now I wish I had a more difficult task in hand: I wish it were harder for me to manage any principle of conviction, that we have not been prepared to meet Christ in his coming, from this consideration of our little difference from the world in these great things of principle, spirit, walking, ends, and worship. For

What a fleshly, wrathful, carnal, worldly spirit hath discovered it self in many professors, nay, in the most? How little of the humble, lowly, meek, loving spirit of Christ? Many think it their glory to be unlike Christ in the spirit of their minds, high, heady, self-full, proud, revengeful: what little difference between them, and the men of the world? How like to one another? What oneness is found in them? Is this to learn Christ? To put on Christ? Is this the image of Christ, that manifests it self in most professors? Nor

Are they at a distance from the world, as to the principle of their walking and working. Do they walk by faith, and work by faith? Are they guided by the wisdom that is from above? Make they God their refuge? Or are any men more dipt into a principle of carnal wisdom, than most professors are? To seek counsel of God, to take

take the law of their proceedings at his mouth, to look up to him for guidance and direction, to derive strength from the Lord Christ by believing for the work of their employments; in how few are these things found? Their own wisdom, their own counsel, their own contrivance, their own abilities, shall do their work. Carnal policy, and fleshly wisdom are their net and drag.

Moreover, what is our conversation? How like the world in our persons, in our families, in our spirits, callings, in whatever the world may properly call its own? Professors have jostled the men of the world out of the possession of the ways of the world. How few are found walking in a world-condemning conversation? A Gospel-glorifying conversation? A fruitful, holy conversation? We are known from the world by word more than by deed; which is not the way that *James* directs us unto.

I might go through with the rest of the considerations mentioned, and manifest that there is another evil found amongst us; for as we have great differences among our selves about little things, so we have little difference from the world in those which are great and weighty.

(3.) Consider the general miscarriage almost of all professors in things prejudicial to the advancement of the Gospel; the pretence, whereof we have served ourselves all along, hath been of the furtherance, propagation, and advancement of the Gospel. Our Lord Christ hath sent out light, and given opportunities suitable unto such a design. Never greater advantages, nor greater opportunities from the foundation of the world. If ever they be required at the hands of this generation, they will be found to have been so: whence then hath it been, that the work hath not gone on and prospered? Why doth it yet stick? Hath it not been from the woful miscarriage of those, who were looked on as the means and instruments of carrying it on? Have there been a few saints in a place? It is odds, that they have been at variance among themselves, and made sport for the vain multitude by their divisions: or they have walked frowardly, provokingly, uselessly, worldly, that their pretence for the Gospel hath been despised, because of their persons. Have they, as men concerned in the honour of Christ and the Gospel, as men enjoying the blessed principle of his spirit, laboured to be useful, fruitful, to do good to all, to be meek, lowly, self-denying, charitable, abounding in good works, patient towards opposers, not reviling again, not returning evil for evil, bearing, suffering, committing all to Christ? Alas! how few are there who have so walked? Could some see believers making it their business to be like Christ in the world, to deny themselves as he did, to do good to all as he did, to be patient under persecution and reproaches as he was, to be tender, pitiful, merciful like him, to abide in faith and prayer as he did; what might we not expect, as to the advancement of the Gospel amongst us? We complain of cold preaching among ministers, of dead and dull attendance in hearers, of contempt of the word in the most, whereby the power of the Gospel is kept within narrow bounds; but the truth is, the prejudices that have been raised by the miscarriages of professors, have had a greater influence unto that evil event, than any of the rest. And hath this been to meet Christ in his coming?

(4.) Of the like nature are the scandalous offences of many. I shall not insist on the scandalous apostasies of many professors, who, some by one great sin, some by another, are fallen off from the profession of the Gospel. I wish that too many other instances might not be found among them that remain. Are there not some proud unto scandal, or sensual unto scandal, or covetous unto scandal, or negligent of their families and relations unto scandal, or conformable to the ways, customs, and fashions of the world unto scandal? I wish no such things might be found among us.

(5.) Add herunto, the general backsliding, or going back from God, that is amongst professors; we scarce seem to be the same generation of men that we were fifteen or sixteen years ago: some have utterly lost their principle. Zeal for God, reformation, purity of ordinances, interest of Christ in his saints, are things to be despised, things that have no concernment in our condition and affairs; as though we had no more need of Christ, or his interest amongst us: and in the best, is not a fresh spirit of our present engagement almost lost?

But why should I insist farther on these things? Are not the things that have been spoken, sufficient for a rebuke, or a conviction at least, that the professing people of Christ have not walked as though they had a just respect to his coming, or his pecu-

liar presence amongst them? May we not justly fear, that our multiplied provocations may at length prevail with him to withdraw, to put a stop to his work that is upon the wheel; not only to leave us to manifold entanglements in the carrying of it on, but also utterly to forsake it, to cast down the tower, and pluck up the hedge that he hath made about his vineyard, and leave it to be laid waste? He must have an heart like the flint in the rock of stone, that doth not tremble at it. But complaints will not be our relief. That which is incumbent on us, if yet there may be hope, is our answering the exhortation in my text. If then any sense do fall upon our spirits, that Christ is come amongst us in a peculiar manner, in the providential alterations and dissolutions that have been among us; and that we have not hitherto demeaned ourselves as becometh them who are called to meet him, and to walk with him in such ways and paths as his amongst us have been; then I say, let us apply ourselves in our next *use* to the exhortation that lies before us, to *all* manner of *holy conversation*.

Use 2. Of exhortation. That I say then which we are now to attend unto, is the exhortation that is included in this expression: *What manner of persons ought we to be?* To further the efficacy of this exhortation, give me leave to premise some few things.

First, There are general reasons of holiness and godliness, and there are special motives unto them. I am not now dealing upon the general reasons of holiness on the account of the covenant of grace, and so shall not press it on those considerations, upon believers as such. But I speak of it in reference unto the peculiar motive mentioned in the text; namely, The providential dissolution of temporal concerns, and so speak to believers as men interested therein, as persons whom Christ hath a special regard unto in these his dispensations. It is one thing to say, *What manner of persons ought ye to be*, whom God hath loved with an everlasting love, whom Christ hath washed in his own blood, who have received the spirit of Christ? And another to say, *Ye that are loved with an everlasting love*, are washed in the blood of Christ, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost. Seeing that Christ is come amongst us, to the dissolution of the great things of the nations, what manner of persons ought you to be? That is it in a peculiar pressing unto holiness on the account of the motive that is intended.

Secondly, There is an holiness and godliness that is required universally at all times, in all places and seasons, and in all persons whatever by the Gospel; and there is a peculiar improvement of that holiness and godliness at some seasons, and in some persons, that is not required at some times, and of some persons. Christ hath work for all the grace of his people in this world; and according as opportunities for that work are presented unto them, they ought to stir up their grace for it. In the times of Christ's coming, he hath great work to do for and by the holiness and godliness of his people: a great testimony is to be given to himself thereby; his work is much to be promoted by it; the world to be convinced, condemned, his judgments against them justify'd in the sight of all; and much more hath Christ to do with the holiness of his people at such a season. Now it is this peculiar improvement of covenant Gospel holiness that is required; not only that holiness that is indispensably incumbent on us by the virtue of the covenant, but that heightning and improvement of it which the season wherein we live, and the work that Christ hath to do, do require of us.

These things being premised, let us now proceed to the management of our exhortation; and observe

(1.) That the Apostle calls us to a consideration how this work may be effected: *What manner of persons ought ye to be?* Consider with yourselves the equity of the matter, the greatness of the motive, and the ways whereby it may be answered. The business is not now to be left at an ordinary rate, nor unto private meditations; it is to be made a matter of solemn consideration and design; it is to be managed with advise and counsel: consider, I say, *what manner of persons*. It is not about holiness in general that I speak, but about that holiness which becomes us in such a season. This then is the first part of this exhortation, that as to the improvement of holiness answerable to the season of this coming of Christ, we would carry it on by design, by counsel, by deliberate consideration; not only labouring to be holy ourselves, but to promote the work of holiness, the eminency, the activity, the usefulness

ness of it in one another, in all believers, so far as our prayers, exhortations, and examples can reach. This the Apostle pleads for on the same account, *Heb. iii. 13.* and *chap. x. 23, 24.* to the same purpose. And we have the practice of it, *Mal. iii. 16.* It was such a time and season as that we treat of, Christ was coming to his temple, *v. 1, 2, 3.* The earth was full of wickedness and contempt of him. What do the saints do? Do they content themselves with their ordinary measures? Do they keep all close to themselves? No, they confer, advise, consult, and that frequently, how, wherein, whereby the expectation of their coming Lord may be answered. The reasons, arguments, way of carrying on such a counsel and design, the Apostle declares, *Rom. xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14.* The time requires it, the duty is urgent, temptations are many, failings have been great, the Lord is nigh at hand. Let then believers enter together into this plot, this design, draw as many as they can into it, promote it by all ways and means possible. Let them get together; make this their aim, their design, engage in it as the duty of their day, of their time and season. This would be a plot that the men of the world would have more just cause to fear, than ever they had of any, and yet dare not question, disturb, or interrupt. A design that would blow up their contrivance, disappoint their counsel, ruin their interest, shake heaven and earth. Let every one contribute the best of his counsel, the best of his grace, the best of his interest in heaven, the utmost of his self-denial to the carrying of it on. Methinks we have dwelt long enough upon others failings, fruitless, selfish designs; the world is full of the noise, the steam, the filth of them. Oh, that the stream of our endeavours might now be another way! Oh, that God would stir up some that might stand up and cry: Who is for God? Who is on our side, for holiness now? If ministers at their meetings; if christians at theirs would make this their business; if all would agree to sacrifice their lusts, their self-love, their by-opinions to this work, what glory would redound to Christ? What salvation would be wrought in the earth? Why do any of us lye complaining? Let us up and be doing, there is no doubt, no question to be made; this is that which Christ lengthens his controversy with us about, that he will bring us to, or ruin us, and destroy us as to this world. Ministers meet: What do they? Pray a while, and spend their time in and about differences, controversies, how they may do this or that which I shall not name. Christians meet, and pray, and go away as they came. Lusts are not sacrificed; faults are not confessed to one another; exhortations mutual are not used; no ground is got for holiness or godliness, but things remain as they did, or rather grow worse and worse every day; at best profession rises, and the power of religion falls and decreases.

I heartily wish professors would be persuaded to come together, to advise, to consult for God, for the glory of Christ and the Gospel, and for their own interest in this thing: to consider what are the pressing temptations of the days wherein we live; what are the corruptions and lusts that are apt to be provoked and excited by these temptations, or by the state of things amongst us; what duties seem to be neglected; and what are the common, visible, failings and scandal of professors, wherein themselves through party, or neglect, or selfishness have been wanting: and to advise and pray for the remedying of all these evils. I wish they would seriously stir up and exhort one another, to contend mightily for the crucifying of all their secret lusts and bosom sins; for heart purity, and likeness to Christ in all things: that they would incite others, and draw all they can into their society and combination in all parts of the nation. In particular, let not us of this place stand still, expecting when others will begin the work; the meaner, poorer, worse we are, the more incumbent is it on us to rise and be doing; the water is moved, teaching is in it, and we strive not who shall enter first, but rather stand striving, contesting with others, to put them before us.

This is the first direction: let us make the matter of holiness and godliness, suited to the coming of Christ, a business of design, counsel, and common engagement. Whereunto every one may contribute of the store which from God he hath received. Blessed will be those servants, whom their master, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

S E R M O N XI.

I Shall now add some cautions as to the pursuit of the first direction.

[1.] Take heed of a degeneration into self righteousness. Intendments of holiness have more than once been ruined by Satan through this deceit: they have set out upon conviction, and ended in pharisaism. Now this hath been done many ways.

1.) Some really convinced of the vanity of an empty profession, and of boasting of faintship upon the account of faith and light without holiness and godliness, which was the way of many when *James* and *John* wrote their *Epistles*, fall to dispute and contend, as well they may, for the absolute necessity of holiness and strict obedience, of fruitfulness and good works. But Satan here gets advantage upon mens natural spirits, their heats and contentions, and insinuates an inherent righteousness, upon the account whereof we should under one pretence or other expect acceptance with God, as to the justification of our persons. So he prevailed upon the *Galatians*. The way is narrow and straight that lies between the indispensable necessity of holiness, and its influence into our righteousness. Because no faith will justify us before God, but that also which will justify itself by fruitfulness before men, a great mistake arises, as though what it doth for its own justification were to be reckoned unto ours. Many in our days have gone off from the mystery of the Gospel on this account.

2.) It prevails from a secret self-pleasing, that is apt to grow on the minds of men, from a singularity in the performance of duties. This is that which the heart-searcher aims to prevent in his command, that *when we have done all, we should say, We are unprofitable servants*; that is, in the secrets of our hearts to sit down in a sense of our own worthlessness. And here lies another great practical difficulty, namely, to have the rejoicing of a good conscience in our integrity and constancy in duties, without a reflection upon something of self, that the soul may please itself, and rest in. *Nehemiah* fixes on the medium, *chap. xiii 22*. He had in the sight of God the testimony of his conscience, concerning the service he had done for the house of God; but as to the rest, he winds up all in mercy, pardon, and grace. *God, I thank thee I am not as other men*, is apt to creep into the heart in a strict course of duties. And this self-pleasing is the very root of self-righteousness, which as it may defile the saints themselves, so it will destroy those who only in the strength of their convictions go forth after an holiness and righteousness; for it quickly produceth the deadly poisonous effect of spiritual pride, which is the greatest assimilation to the nature of the Devil that the nature of man is capable of.

3.) Our own holiness hath an advantage upon spiritual sense against the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of Christ, is utterly a strange thing to the best of unbelievers; and this puts them by all means upon the setting up of their own, *Rom. x. 3*. And believers themselves know it only by faith, *Rom. i. 17*. which is *of things not seen*. But what we are ourselves, what we do, what we aim at, and in what manner, this we have a near sense of. And holiness is apt to insinuate it self into the conscience with a beauty that is none of its own, to profer itself to the soul's embraces instead of Jesus Christ. Its native beauty consists in its answering the will of God, conforming the soul to the likeness of Christ, and being useful in the world, in a covenant of mere mercy. From its presence, and the sense we have of it, the heart is apt to put a varnish and false beauty upon it, as to the relief of conscience upon the account of justification. As it was of old with the children of *Israel*, when *Moses* was in the mount, and not seen, nor had they any visible pledge of the presence of God, instantly they turned their gold into a calf that would be always present with them. Being in the dark as to the righteousness of Christ, which

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is as it were, absent from them, men set up their own holiness in the stead of it; which, though of it self it be of God, yet turned into self-righteousness, is but a calf, an idol, that cannot save them.

This is my first caution. But that we may make the better improvement of it, as unto present practice, I shall add some evidences of the prevalency, or at least contending of self-righteousness for an interest in the soul, under a pretence of duty and holiness. As

(1. When under a design of holiness, there is an encrease of a bondage frame of Spirit. When the mind begins to be enslaved to the duties which it doth itself perform. When that amplitude, freedom, and largeness of mind, which is in a gracious frame of heart, decays; and a servile, bondage frame grows in the room of it; so that the soul doth what it doth under this notion, that it dare not do otherwise. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, *2 Cor. iii. 17*. Those that come to Christ, he makes free, *Job. viii. 36*. There is freedom and spiritual largeness of heart unto obedience and duty. A will unto duty enlarged, dilated, and sweetened by love, delight, joy, complacency in the matter of obedience, is the freedom we speak of. This frame, I confess, is not always alike prevalent in gracious souls: they may have things ready to dye; sin within, temptations without, desertion from God, all of them together, each of them may disturb this harmony, and bring them for a time, it may be a long time, under an indisposition unto such a frame: but this is for the most part predominant. When such a frame decays, or is not, all endeavours, pains, attempts, severities in duties, do all relate to the law, to bondage; and consequently lead to self-righteousness, fear, subjection of conscience to duties, not God in Christ in the duty, fluctuating of peace according to performances; the soul in its strictest course had need fear a snare.

(2. Increasing in form, and withering in power. Forms are of three sorts. 1.] Those of Institution. 2.] Moral. 3.] Arbitrary in conversation.

1.] There are forms and ways of worship, whereof some are, and all pretend to be, of Christ's institution. Let us at present take it for granted, that they are all what they are apprehended to be, namely, from Christ. For a man to grow high, earnest, zealous, in and about them, to be strict and severe in contending for them, and yet find no spiritual refreshment in them, or communion with God, nor to grow in faith and love by them, is to dwell on the confines of self-righteousness, if not hypocrisy. This was the very sin of the *Jews*, about their institutions so much condemned in the Scripture. None use instituted ways or forms of worship profitably, but such as find communion with God in them, or are seriously humbled because they do not.

2.] The outward form of moral duties, that depend not merely on institution, is the same. Such are praying, preaching, hearing, abounding in them without a suitable increase in grace, power, liberty, love, meekness, lowliness of mind, argues, though under the highest light to the contrary, a real mixture of self.

3.] There are also outward forms in conversation, that are used to the same purpose. We have had some who have changed their outward form in a few years, as often as *Laban* changed *Jacob's* wages. What shape they will next turn themselves into, I know not. This is not going from strength to strength, and increasing in life and power, but from one shape to another; and in their word and prophecy is directly proportioned, and answerable in its outward appearance to the administration of the Old Testament, and not at all to the spiritual dispensation of the New. So it may be feared that in the principle of their obedience, they lye under a legal bondage and self-righteousness, which hath utterly spoiled that which perhaps in its first design set out for mortification and holiness.

(3. Where self-righteousness is getting ground, these two, bondage and form, at length bring forth burdensomeness and wearisomeness. This God charges on such justiciaries, *Isa. xliii. 22*. *Thou hast been weary of me*. The ways and worship of God grow very grievous and burdensome to such a soul. He is a stranger to that of the Apostle: *His commandments are not grievous*: and that of our Saviour himself: *My yoke is easy, and my burden light*. The easiness of the yoke of Christ ariseth from the assistance that is given to him that bears it by the Holy Ghost; as also the connaturalness that is wrought in the heart to all the duties of it. Both these accompany a Gospel frame. But when a soul is deserted of these, the yoke grows heavy,

and galleth him, but yet he must go on; this is from self-righteousness. Let this then be our first caution.

[2.] Take heed of monastick uselessness. I am persuaded monkery came into the world not only with a glorious pretence, but also with a sincere intention. Men weary of the ways, weary of the lusts, and sin of the world, designing personal holiness left their stations, and withdrew themselves into retirement. *David* was almost gone with this design, *Psal.* lv. 6. *O that I had wings.* And *Jer.* ix. 2. *O that I had a lodging in the wilderness.* Whose heart hath not been exercised with reasonings of this kind? Oh that we could be freed from the incumbrances and provocations of this world; what manner of persons might we be in all holy conversation and godliness? But consider

1.) What success this design prosecuted hath had in others. How quickly did it degenerate into wretched superstition, and was thereon blasted and rejected of God?

2.) God can suffer temptation to pursue us into a wilderness, that shall more obstruct us in the progress of holiness, than all the difficulties we meet withal in this world. It is not of what kind our temptations are, but what assistance we are to expect under them, that we are to look after.

3.) Not our communion, but God's work is to be consider'd. God hath work to do in this world, and to desert it because of its difficulties and entanglements, is to cast off his authority. Universal holiness is required of us, that we may do the will of God in our generation, *Gen.* vi. 9. It is not enough that we be just, that we be righteous, and walk with God in holiness; but we must also serve our generation, as *David* did, before he fell asleep. God hath a work to do, and not to help him, is to oppose him.

[3.] Take heed of laying a design for holiness in a subserviency unto any carnal interest; of crying with *Jehu*, *Come see my zeal for the Lord of hosts*, thereby to do our own work, and compass our own ends. The great scandal that hath befallen the days wherein we live, and which hath hardened the spirits of many against all the ways of God, is, that religion, godliness, zeal, holiness, have been made a cloak for carnal and secular ends. What of this hath been really given, and what hath been taken on false imaginations, the last day will discover. In the mean time this is certain, that there is a corruption in the heart of man, rising up to such a visible prostitution of the whole profession of religion, which of all things must be carefully avoided.

And this is the grand exhortation that I shall insist on: let it be our design to promote generation holiness in ourselves and others, with the cautions insisted on.

(2.) That which in the next place is considerable, is the proposing of the ingredients that lye in the motive to holiness here expressed by the Apostle: *Seeing that these things shall be dissolved.* As,

[1.] It will be a furtherance of holiness to take off our hearts from an esteem and valuation of all things, that are so obnoxious to dissolution. An estimation or valuation of earthly things is on all accounts the greatest hindrance to the promotion of holiness. Earthly-mindedness, pride of spirit, elation above our brethren, self-estimation, carnal confidence, contempt of the wisdom and grace of others, aptness to wrath and anger; some, or all of these, always accompany such a frame.

The Apostle also makes this an effectual means of the improvement of holiness, that the mind be taken off from the delightful contemplation of visible things, *2 Cor.* iv. 18. Things will work towards a *weight of glory*: in which words the Apostle alludes to the Hebrew word, כבוד *glory*, which comes from a root, signifying *to weigh*, or *to be heavy*; that being the only weighty thing, and all others light and of no moment. This way, I say, things will work, whilst our minds are taken off from things that are seen. The mind's valuation of them is as great an obstruction to the growth of holiness, as any thing whatever that can beset us in our pilgrimage. Now what can give a greater alloy to the warmth of our thoughts and minds, than their continual obnoxiousness to dissolution and change? This the Apostle makes his argument every where. They are temporal things, saith he, things that abide not, things obnoxious to change and ruin: *The world passeth away, and the figure of it. Wilt thou set thine heart upon that which is not?* And there lies the force of the inference under consideration: *Seeing that these things shall be dissolved*, and it may be in a way

way of judgment, in a dreadful, fearful manner; how is it incumbent on us to fix our hearts on more durable things, to choose the better part, the better portion? What advantage can it be to enlarge our hearts to the love of the things that are upon the wing? To cleave to parting things with our affections? To grow in our desires after that which withdraws itself from us continually? Let us then consider, how many duties have been omitted, how many temptations have been offered, and objected to us; how many spiritual frames of heart prevented or expelled; how much looseness and vanity of mind introduced; how much self-confidence promoted, by an over-valuation of these things: and we shall then see what influence a watching against it may have to the furtherance of a design of holiness.

[2.] It will be so, to take off our care about them. This also is a worm that lies at the root of obedience, and is of itself able to wither it, if not removed. Our Lord Jesus Christ, giving us instruction how we should be prepared for the coming of such a day, as that whereof we are speaking, charges us, among other things, to take heed that we *be not overcharged with the cares of this life*, Luk. xxi. 34. Indeed there is nothing so opposite to that peculiar holiness and godliness that is required of us in and under great providential dissolutions, as this of care about perishing things. The special holiness that we press after, is a due mixture of faith, love, self-denial, fruitfulness, all working in a peculiar and eminent manner. Now to every one of these is this care a canker and a gangrene, fitted to eat out and devour the life and spirit of them. The very nature of faith consists in an universal casting of our care on God, 1 *Pet.* v. 7. *Cast all your care on him.* All our care about temporal, spiritual, eternal things, let us cast all this on God, our whole burden; this is believing, this is faith: and what is more opposite unto it, than this care and solicitousness of the soul about the obtaining or retaining of these things? Resignation, acquiescency, rest, all which are acts or effects of faith, are devoured by it. Trust in God, affiance, delight in his will, ruins them all. How can a soul glorify God in believing in a difficult season, that is overlaid with this distemper? Nothing is more diametrically opposite thereunto.

Love enlarges the heart to Christ, and every thing of Christ; valuation, delight, satisfaction accompany it: it makes the heart free, noble, ready for service, compassionate, zealous; nothing is more called for in such a day: and the decay of faith in the trials and temptations of such a season, is called, the *waxing cold of love*; as the fruit decays, when the root is consumed. To think of glorifying God in the days wherein we live, without hearts warmed, enlarged, made tender, compassionate by Gospel love, is to think to fly without wings, or to walk without feet. What day almost, what business, wherein our love is not put to the trial in all the properties of it; whether it can bear and forbear; whether it can pity and relieve; whether it can hope all things, and believe all things; whether it can exercise itself towards friends and towards enemies; whether it can give allowance for mens weakness and temptations; whether it can value Christ above all, and rejoice in him in the loss of all; and many the like things is it continually tried withal. Now nothing so contracts and withers the heart, as to all these things, as the cares of this world do. Whatever is selfish, fearful, unbelieving, is enwrapped in them. They sometimes pine, wither, and render useless the whole man, always drink up the spirit, and deprive it of any communion with God in any thing it hath to do.

The same may be said concerning self-denial and fruitfulness; which in an eminent manner Christ now calls upon us for. Love, care, and fear about the things that shall be dissolved, unframes the soul for them.

On these considerations, and the like which might be added, may this direction be improved, and no small obstacle unto a course of universal holiness and godliness, be taken away. Is the power, are the riches, the pleasures of the world valuable? Alas! they are all passing away. It is but *yet a little while, and their place shall know them no more*. Yet could we take off our hearts from an undue valuation of these things, and care about them, half our work was done.

(3.) That which remains for the closing of our discourse on this subject, is to give some few motives unto the duty proposed: and I shall only mention three generals, [1.] Relating unto our selves. [2.] Unto others. [3.] Unto Christ himself.

[1.] As to our selves; this alone will maintain peace and quiet in our souls in and under those dissolutions of things that we are to be exercised with. We know what deso-

desolations, what ruin of families, what destruction of all outward enjoyments in many, they have already in these nations been attended with: and we know not how soon, nor by what ways or means, the bitterest part of the cup, as to outward pressures and calamities, may become our portion. We have seen somewhat of the beginning of the work of Christ; where he will cease, what he hath yet farther to do, we know not. Our concernment then certainly was never greater than it is at this day, to keep up peace and rest within. If there should be a confederacy of outward and inward trouble, who can stand before it? A wounded body, a wounded, it may be, ruined estate, and a wounded spirit all together, who can bear? This is that alone which the world cannot take from us; which is not obnoxious to sword, fire, plots, conspiracies, nothing without us; even the peace that is left us, left to our own keeping, through the Holy Ghost by Jesus Christ. It is not committed to parliaments, to armies, to rulers to keep for us; it is committed to our own souls to keep, through the Holy Ghost, and no man can take it from us. Again, as it is valuable on this account, that it cannot be taken from us; so on this also, that it will countervail and support us under the loss of all that can. Peace in God, rest in sole retirement, quietness, and security of mind on spiritual Gospel accounts, sense of God's love in Christ, will support and keep life and vigour in the soul in the loss of outward peace, with whatever is desirable and valuable unto us on any account that relates to this world.

Now there is no maintaining of this peace and rest in such a season, without the performance of this duty. So dealt *Habakkuk*, chap. iii. 16. *I trembled in myself that I might rest in the day of trouble.* That which God required of him in that season, that he brought up his soul unto, that he might have rest; and his endeavour had the glorious issue mentioned, *ver.* 17, 18. Though spiritual peace may radically and virtually live under many sins and provocations; yet it will not flourish under them, or bring forth any refreshing fruit. To have the fruit and effect of peace under a continuance in any known sin, is impossible. Now the omission of any known duty, is a known sin; and that a peculiar pressing after eminency in universal holiness and godliness in such a season is a known duty, I have before evinced: no maintaining of inward peace, rest in God without it: and we shall be sure to be tried, whether it be in us of a truth, or not. I discourse not what the carnal security of scared, blinded, hardened sinners will do; but I am sure, the weak, tottering, uncertain peace of many believers, will not support them in such trials, as it is not only possible that we may, but probable that we shall meet withal. Would you now desire that your Master should find you unprepared; that he should make his entrance whilst all things were in disorder? If the heavens should thunder over you, and the earth tremble under you, and the sword stand ready to devour; Oh! what sad thoughts must you have, if at the same time you should be forced to say: O my soul, is not God mine enemy also? May not wrath, and hell, and judgment be at the end of this dispensation? What is the reason, that a very rumour, a noise oftentimes is ready to fill many of our souls with such disturbances? Is it not because this peace doth not flourish in the inward man? And what shall we do in the day of trial it self? Let us then endeavour as *Peter* exhorts, 2 *Ep.* iii. 14. *to be found of Christ in peace.* And what may we do that we may be found of him in peace? Why, saith he, *be without spot and blameless.* Let him come when he will, in what way he pleases, we shall be found in a way of peace, if we be found spotless and blameless in a way of holiness: *And blessed is that servant, whom his master, when he cometh shall find so doing.* This will give light in a dungeon, as it did to *Paul* and *Silas*; ease in the fire, in the furnace, as to *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*; contentment in the loss of all, as it did to *Job*; satisfaction on the foresight of future trouble, as it did to *David*, *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant.* Whatever sword be in the hand of Christ; whatever fire or tempest be before him, and round about him; what vengeance soever he is to take on any, or all of the sons of men, this peace kept up by the holiness he requires in such a season, will make a way to his bosom-love, and there repose the soul in rest and quietness.

[2.] As to others, what *Paul* saith to *Timothy* in another case about preaching of the Gospel, may in some sense be spoken in this: *Take heed*, saith he, *to thy doctrine*; for thereby thou shalt save thy self, and them that hear thee. Who knows but

but that hereby we may save ourselves, and the nation wherein we live. The Lord Christ hath certainly a controversy with these nations, he hath begun to deal with them in his indignation; and we know that there are provocations enough amongst us, to stir him up unto our ruin. Who knows, I say, but that by meeting him in a way of generation-holiness, we may divert deserved ruin, at least hinder that it be not brought upon us for the provocations of his sons and daughters?

Now there are several ways, whereby this may have an influence into the safety and deliverance of the nations themselves.

1.) By setting all things right between Christ and the saints, that he may have no need farther to shake the earth, and dissolve the heavens of the nations, to awaken his own from their security, to loosen them from perishing things, or to accomplish any other glorious end towards them. Christ sometimes sifts nations, that his wheat may be separated from the chaff; he sets nations on fire, that they may be a furnace for the trial of his own; and when their dross is cleansed, he will quench his fire. When there was but one saint in a ship, yet it was for his sake that a storm came on all the rest. It is not always for the sins of the wicked, that they may be destroyed, that he comes in a way of judgment; but for the sins of his people, that they may be cleansed. So *judgment, as Peter speaks, begins at the house of God.* It is not unlikely, that our troubles were brought on these nations for the sins of the nations in their persecution of Christ, his truths, and saints against great light. Nor is it less unlikely, that troubles are continued on these nations, for the sins of the saints themselves, such as those before insisted on. Now what is it that in such trials Christ calls for, and which he will not cease calling for, until he prevails? Is it not the work which we are in the pursuit of, weanedness from the world, self-denial, zeal for truth, humbleness, fruitfulness, faithfulness, universal holiness? If here then lies the root of Christ's controversy with these nations, as most probably it doth; if this be the cause of our troubles, as to me questionless it is, an engagement into the pursuit of this work, is the only remedy and cure of the evils that we either feel or fear in these nations. Other remedies have been tried, and all in vain. O that we had hearts through the Holy Ghost to make trial of this, which the great physician Jesus Christ hath prescribed unto us! Heaven and earth call for it at our hands; the nations groan under our sin; if we regard not ourselves, yet let us make it our business to deliver *England* out of the hand of the Lord, *Josh. xxii. 31.*

2.) In that it may be an effectual means for the reformation of the nation. Reformation is the great thing that we have been talking of many years; and this hath been our condition in our attempts after it; the more that light for it hath broken forth amongst us, the more unreformed hath the body of the people been, yea the more opposite for the most part unto reformation: and may not this, among other things, be one occasion, yea the principal cause of it; the light of truth hath been accompanied with so many scandals in some, with so little power and evidence in the most, that prejudices have been strengthened in the minds of men against all that hath been pretended or professed. I am persuaded, that a design for generation-holiness, carried on according to the light that we have received, would have a greater influence on the minds of the men of the world to look after reformation, than any of our intreaties or exhortations have yet obtained. We are contemptible to the nation in our pressing after reformation, whilst we are divided amongst ourselves, conformable to the world; whilst we proclaim our unmortified lusts, pride, covetousness, ambition, revenge, self-seeking. Would all the people of God stir up themselves to shew forth the power of that faith and life they have received, and so take away advantage from obdurate opposers of the Gospel, and give an eminent example to others, who now abhor them on the account of many prejudices that they have taken; the nation would be more awaken'd unto their duty than now they are. Were we agreed and united on this principle, that we would jointly and severally make this our design; what work might be wrought in families, counsels, counties, cities? Now reformation is acknowledged to be the means, the only means of the preservation of a nation, and this the only means of that.

3.) This is the most effectual way of standing in the gap, to turn away the indignation of the Lord against the nation. Whatever is required thereunto, is contained in this design of holiness; there is reformation, there is wrestling by prayer, sundry promises improving our interest in Christ, all included in this duty. Now this is the most common

way of saving nations. When wrath is ready to break forth, some *Moses* or *Samuel*, stands up, and pleads for a deliverance, and prevails. Says God, Destroy not the cluster, there is a blessing in it. When the greatest and most dreadful judgment, that God ever executed on sinners in this world, was coming forth, had there been ten persons following after holiness, its accomplishment had been prevented. Here then we have a project to save three nations by; and without this, in vain shall they use any other remedies, they shall not be healed.

[3.] Consider this thing, how it relates unto Christ and his glory. All the revenue of glory or honour that we bring unto Christ in this world, is by our obedience or holiness. He did not dye for us, that we might be great, or wise, or learned, or powerful in the world; but that he might purify us to be a peculiar people unto himself, zealous of good works. This was his design and aim, that he might have an holy people, a faithful people in the world. He tells us, that herein his Father is glorified, that we bear much fruit; not that we be successful, that we rule and prevail, that we are in credit and reputation, but that we bring forth much fruit; and in the glory of the Father is the Son glorified also. It is this alone that adorns the doctrine of his Gospel, and lifts up his name in the world; but especially is Christ glorified, by the holiness of his saints in such a season; because

1.) Thereby we bear witness to the world, that indeed we believe him to be come forth amongst us, and that the works that are on the wheel relate to his kingdom and interest. Let us talk of it whilst we please, unless we live and walk as those who have communion with Christ in the works he doth, the world will yet think that whatever we profess, yet indeed we believe as they do, that it is a common thing that hath befallen us. But when indeed they shall see, that there is a real reverence of his person upon our spirits, and that we bestir ourselves in his ways, like servants in the presence of their master; this carries a conviction along with it. To hear men talk of the coming of Christ, and the day of Christ, and the great and terrible things that Christ hath done in these days; and yet in the mean time to walk as the men of the world, in a spirit of pride, selfishness, and wrath, in sensuality or pleasure, in neglect of prayer and humiliation; yea of all Gospel duties, swearers and drunkards do not so dishonour Christ, as such men do. But let men but see professors making it their business to be holy, humble, self-denying, useful in the world, condescending in love, resigning all to God, they cannot but say, Well, this is a great day to the saints; they verily believe that Christ is among them. This is a professing that brings conviction; words are but as speaking with tongues, that work not out the glory of Christ.

2.) Thereby we bear witness unto what sort of kingdom it is, that Christ hath in the world, and what a kind of King he is. I cannot but fear that our talking of the kingdom of Christ, and managing our notions of it, at least in the world's apprehensions, to carnal advantages, hath been a notable hindrance of the coming of it forth in beauty and glory amongst us. Every party talks of the kingdom of Christ, some more, some less, all pretend unto it; but it is evident, that many would set him on his throne with the petition of *Zebedee's* children in their mouths, that they may sit on his right hand, and his left. Hence the world doth really persuade itself, and is hardened every day in that persuasion, that whatever is pretended of Christ, it is self-interest that carries all before it; and that men do entertain that notion for the promotion of self-ends. But now this design of abounding in real holiness sets up the pure, unmixed, interest of Christ, and casts a conviction upon the world to that purpose. When the world may read in our lives, that the kingdom we look for, though it be in this world; yet is not indeed of this world, but is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: this brings that honour to Christ, wherein he is delighted; and the ignorance of foolish men is put to silence.

3.) This brings honour unto Christ, and glorifies him in all the vengeance that he executes on his enemies, and all the care that he takes of his own. The world itself is hereby made to see, that there is a real difference indeed in them, between whom Christ puts a difference, and is convinced of the righteousness of his judgments. Every one may answer them, when they enquire the reason of the dispensations amongst us. Yea, they may answer themselves: The Lord hath done great things for these, even these that serve him.

* S E R M O N XII.

Humane Power defeated.

PSAL. lxxvi. 5.

The stout hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.

THE common circumstances of this *Psalm*, concerning the *penman*, title, and the like, I shall not at all enquire after. The *time* of its being given to the Church is alone to us considerable: and yet all the knowledge thereof also is but conjectural. What particular time it was wherein it was given, we know not; but that it was given for the use of all times, that we know. Probable it is, from *v. 3.* that it was established as a monument of praise in the days of *Hezekiah*, when by the immediate hand of God, *Jerusalem* was delivered from the army of *Sennacherib*. For a return of which mercy, though good *Hezekiah* came short of the obligation laid on him, rendring not again according to the benefit done unto him; yet the Lord himself takes care for his own glory, setting forth this *Psalm* as a monument of the praise due to his name unto all generations.

The deliverance of *Jerusalem* then from so great ruin, as that impending over it from the threatening army of *Sennacherib* under their walls, being the occasion of penning this *Psalm*, it cannot but yield us a meet foundation of making mention of the name of the Lord in a suitable work this day.

In general, the whole is *eucharistical*, and hath two parts: First *narratory*, concerning the work of God for his people: Secondly *laudatory*, or the praise of his people for those works.

The *first* part, hath three particulars:

1. An *exordium*, by way of exultation and rejoicing, *v. 1, 2.*
2. A special *narration* of the work of God, for which the praise of the whole is intended, *v. 3, 5, 6.*
3. An *apostrophe* to the Lord concerning the one, and the other, *v. 4.*

The *latter* containeth:

1. A doctrinal *observation* for the use of the Church from the whole, *v. 7.*
2. The *reasons* and confirmation of the doctrine so laid down, taken from the power and righteousness of God in the actions recounted, *v. 8, 9.*
3. A threefold *use* of the doctrine so confirmed. Of instruction, *v. 10.* Of exhortation, *v. 11.* Of establishment and consolation, *v. 12.*

The particulars preceding my text I shall a little touch upon, that the mind of the Holy Ghost therein may be the more clear unto you, and the doctrine from thence appear with the greater evidence.

1. In the *exordium*, ver. 1, 2. you have two things. (1.) The names of the place wherein the work mentioned was wrought, and the praise returned held forth;

* Upon the defeat of the levellers at Burford, 18. May 1649. This Sermon was preached before the Parliament 7. June following: as appears by Whitlock's Memoirs, fol. 391. col. 2.

and these are *Judah, Israel, Salem, Sion*. (2.) The relation of God unto this place, which lies at the bottom of the work he did for them, and the praise they returned unto him. He was known; his name was great amongst them; there was his tabernacle and his dwelling place; which may be referred to two heads: The knowledge of his will, *ver. 1.* and the establishment of his worship, *ver. 2.*

(1.) For the description of the place, by its several names and titles, I shall not insist upon it: they are all but various expressions of the same thing. It is the Church of God that is adorned with all these titles, and names of singular endearment. *Judah*, that single tribe of which the Messiah was to come: *Israel*, a prevailing people, the posterity of him that prevailed with God: *Salem*, the place he chose above all the places of the earth to settle his name therein: and *Sion*, the choice ornament of that *Salem*, a model wherein the beauty and excellency of all the other are contracted; whose gates were then so dear unto the Lord. Or perhaps, you have the distribution of the whole into its several parts: *Judah*, the governing tribe: *Israel*, the body of the people: *Salem*, the chief place of their residence and glory: and *Sion*, the presence of God in his worship amongst them all. Now the mention of these titles of the Church, so dear to the Lord, doth front the following narration, to afford us this observation.

Obs. The care of *Salem*, of *Sion*, lies at the bottom of all God's powerful actings and workings among the sons of men. Every mighty work of God throughout the world, may be prefaced with these two *verses*. The whole course of affairs in the world, is steered by providence in reference to the good of *Salem*: *Sion* hath been the rise and downfall of all the powers of the world: it is her deliverance or trial that is intended in their raising, and her recompence and vengeance in their ruin. God works not among the nations for their own sakes. When they are sifted with a sieve, they are but the chaff, *Israel* is the corn, for whose sake it is done, whereof not the least grain shall fall to the ground, *Amos ix. 9.* She is *precious in God's sight and honourable*; he loved her, therefore he giveth men for her and people for her life, *Isa. xliii. 4.* The men of the world are very apt to pride themselves in their thoughts, as though great were their share and interest in the glorious things that God is accomplishing: like the fly that sat on the chariot wheel, and cried, What a dust have I raised round about? The truth is, their names are written in the dust, and they are of no account in the eyes of the Lord in all he is accomplishing, but only to exalt his name in their miscarriage and destruction. Was it not in the thoughts of some lately amongst us, that their right hand had accomplished the work of the Lord, and that the end of it must be the satisfaction of their lusts? And hath not the Lord declared, that they have neither part nor lot in this matter? It was *Salem*, not self; *Sion*, not *Babylon*, or confusion, that lay at the bottom of the whole.

(2.) There is the relation of God unto this place. His will was known there, *ver. 1.* and his worship was established, *ver. 2.* And these also have their particular mention.

Obs. In the deliverance of his people, God hath a special regard to the honour of his ordinances. Why so great things for *Salem*? Why there his word is preached, whereby his will is known, and his name made great: there his tabernacle is fixed, and his dwelling-place established: there he gives his presence in his worship and ordinances, wherein he is delighted. *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem, shall kings bring presents to thee*, *Psal. lxxviii. 29.* Here is the temple, Christ; and then the worship of Christ: for their sake it shall be done. When vengeance is recompensed upon an opposing people, it is the vengeance of the temple, *Jer. l. 28.* And it is a voice from thence that rendreth recompence to his enemies, *Isa. lxvi. 6.* The great work which the Lord at this day is accomplishing in the world, looks fully on this one thing. Wherefore is it that God shaketh the powers of this world, and causeth the towers to totter which they uphold? Is it not that the way of his worship may be vindicated from all their abominations, and vengeance taken upon them for their opposition thereunto? And there is no greater sign of God's care for a people, than when he shews a regard to his ordinances among that people. The defence he gives, is of the glory of the assemblies of mount *Zion*, *Isa. iv. 5.* When the ark departs, you may call the children *Ichabod*. The taking away of his candlestick, the removal of his glory from the temple, is an assured prologue to the utter ruin of a people.

And

And hath not the Lord had a special eye this way in the late deliverance? It is his promise, that he will purge the rebels from amongst his people. And he hath done it. Were there not children of *Edom* amongst them, who cried, Down with them, down with them even to the ground? Hath not God magnified his despised word above all his name? Was it not as an off-scouring to many particular persons among them in the late murmuring for preeminence, against those whom the Lord hath chosen? Who I suppose have no other joy in their employment, than *Moses* had in his; who once desired the Lord to slay him, that he might be freed from his burden; only the will of the Lord, and the good of a poor thankless people swayed their hearts unto it. And were there here any more discriminating rods cast in before the Lord, to have that bud and spring which he owned, as *Numb. xvii.* than this one; scripture, or no scripture; solemn worship, or none at all? I speak only as to some particulars, and that I can upon my own experience. The Lord give their hearts a free discovery of his thoughts in this business. Doubtless he hath had respect to his tabernacle and dwelling place. For my part, they are to me as the *Theban*-shield; and notwithstanding all my pressures, I would labour to say as *Mephibosheth*, *Let all go, since I see the king in peace.*

I might farther observe from both these things together, that among the people of God alone is the residence of his glorious presence. This song is held out from *Zion*: *In his temple doth every one speak of his glory*, *Psal. xxix. 9.* *Bless ye God in the congregation, the Lord from the fountain of Israel*, *Psal. lxviii. 26.* *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion*, *Psal. lxxv. 1.* *As a lame leg, and as a thorn in the hand*, ungraceful, painful; *so is a parable in the mouth of fools*, *Prov. xxvi. 7, 9.* It is the saints who are bid to be joyful in the Lord, and the high praise of God must be in their mouths, *Psal. cxlix. 5, 6.* They are high things, that becom only those whom God doth magnify. If the Lord give us matter of praise, pray know from whom it will be acceptable, whose praises they are he delighteth to inhabit. If you have some defiled lust, the sun-shine of mercies will exhale nothing but the offensive steam of carnal affections. The sacrifices of wicked hearts are an abomination to the Lord. If your fleshly affections work this day without the beatings of a pure heart, and the language of a pure lip, the Lord will reject your oblations. Would you have your praise as sweet to the Lord, as a mercy is to you; be assured that in Christ you are the *Israel* of God, and your prayers shall prevail, your praise shall be accepted.

2. The second particular, as I observed, is a special narration of the works of God, for which the whole is intended, *ver. 3, 4, 5, 6.* And therein you have these two things: (1.) The place where these acts were wrought, and are remembered, *there*, *ver. 3.* (2.) The acts themselves related, which refer, [1.] To God the worker, *ver. 3. He brake.* [2.] To the persons on whom they were wrought, *ver. 5, 6.*

(1.) The place where these things were acted, and the monuments of them erected, that is, *there*; there in *Salem* and *Zion*, *Judah* and *Israel*: there, not so much in those places, as with reference unto them.

Obs. All the mighty actings of God regard his Church, and there are the monuments and trophies of his victories against his enemies erected. To the first part of this, I spake before. A word for the latter. God decketh and maketh *Zion* glorious with the spoils of his adversaries. There the glory of *Pharaoh* and all his host, drowned in the *red sea*, is dedicated, *Exod. xv.* There are the shields of all the mighty men in the host of *Sennacherib*, slain by an angel, hung up, *Isa. xxxvii. 35, 36.* There is the honour, the robes, the crown, and the reason of *Nebuchadnezzar* laid up for the glory of *Zion*, *Dan. iv. 33, 34.* himself being changed into a beast. There is all the pomp and glory of *Herod* deposited, *Acts xii. 23.* when, as a reward of his pride and persecution, he was devoured of worms. There is the glory of all persecutors, with the blood of *Julian* in a special manner, who threw it into the air, and cried, *Vicisti Galilee.* There *Haman* is visibly exalted upon the gallows by himself erected for the ruin of a prince of the people, *Esth. vii. 10.* There the peace and the joy of the Church, their choice frame under the bloody massacres of the inhabitants of *Zion*, is set to shew, for the glory of it. There are all the rochets of popish prelates, the crowns, and glory, and thrones of the kings of the earth, all set apart, as monuments and trophies of God's victories in *Zion*. There is a place

place reserved for the man of sin, and all the kings of the earth who have committed fornication with the mother of harlots, whose destruction sleepeth not. God will at length certainly glorify *Salem* with the arrow of the bow, the shield, the sword, and all spoils of its oppressors.

(2.) There is what he did describe, both immediately in the actions themselves, *ver. 3.* and with reference to the persons towards whom he so acted, *ver. 5.* Now because the former is fully contained in the latter, I shall not handle it apart, but descend immediately to the consideration of the words of my text, being a declaration of what the Lord hath done for his people in the day of their distress, with particular reference to the cause of that distress.

And here we shall look a little

1. To the reading of the words: and

2. To their explication.

1. To their reading. The *stout-hearted*; or, the *strong in heart*, the *mighty in heart*: so in the original. Men of stout, stubborn, unperfuadable hearts and courage, whose epithet is, *That they are far from righteousness*, Isa. xlv. 12. The Septuagint have rendred it, ἀσύνετοι τῇ καρδίᾳ, *the foolish in heart*. Stubborn hearted men are foolish hearted men: not to yield unto, is worse than not to understand, what is good. They are *spoiled*, ἠλθὺν ἑαυτοὺς ὑποτάξαντες τῇ σποίᾳ, *have yielded themselves to the spoil*: so properly, and so rendred by most interpreters; which sense I shall follow. *They have slept their sleep*, ἠκοιμήσαντο, *they have slumbered their sleep*. What it is to *slumber a sleep* we shall see afterwards. The residue of the words are literally rendred, save only in the placing of the negation; for whereas we set it on the persons, *none of the men*; in the original it is upon the act, *have not found*, affirming concerning the persons, *all the men of might have not*, that is, *none of the men of might have*; a very frequent *Hebraism*, imitated by *John*, 1 Ep. iii. 15. πᾶς ἀνθρώπος ὁ μὴ ἔχει τὴν ζωὴν, *Every man-slayer hath not life*, i. e. *none hath*. And so you have the words: *The stout of heart have yielded themselves to the spoils, they have slumbered their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.*

2. The words thus read contain three general heads.

(1.) A twofold description of the enemies of *Salem*.

[1.] In respect of their internal affections: they were *stout of heart*, men of high spirit, and haughty courage, *cedere nescientes*, not knowing how to yield to any thing but the dictates of their own proud spirits.

[2.] In respect of their power for outward acting, *Men of might*, strong of hand, as well as stout of heart. Courage without strength will but betray its possessor, and strength without courage is but *inutile pondus*, a burdensome nothing; but when both meet, a stout heart and strong hands, who shall stand before them? Thus you have the enemies set out like *Goliath* with his spear and helmet, defying the host of the living God.

(2.) You have a twofold issue of God's providence, in dealing with them suitably to this their double qualification.

[1.] He opposeth himself to the stoutness of their hearts, and they *yield themselves to the spoil*. Where observe, First, the act itself: they *yield themselves*. Nothing in the world so contrary to a stout heart, as to yield itself. To yield, is a thing of the greatest distance and contrariety to the principle of a stout heart, in the world. It is far more reconcileable to death, than yielding. But this God will effect. Secondly, the extent of this yielding: it was *to the spoil*. This exceedingly heightens the mighty working of the Lord against them. Should they be brought to yield to reason, persuasion, and union, it were well; but that they should be so prevailed on as to yield to the spoil, that is, to the mercy of those against whom they rose and opposed themselves, this is *digitus Dei*.

[2.] He opposeth himself to their actual might: they *found not their hands*. Hands are the instruments of acting the heart's resolution. The strength and power of a man is in his hands; if they be gone, all his hope is gone. If a man's sword be taken from him, he will do what he can with his hands; but if his hands be gone, he may go to sleep for any disturbance he will work. For men not to find their hands, is not to have that power for the execution of their designs which formerly they had. In former days they had hands, power for doing great things; but now when they should use them against *Salem*, they could not find them. And why so?

God had taken them away; God took away their power, their strength departed from them. *Sampson* found not his strength, when his locks were cut; though he thought to do as at other times, yet he was deceived and taken. When God takes away mens power, they go forth, and think to do as in former days; but when they come to exercise it, all is gone; their hands are laid out of the way, in allusion to one that seeketh.

(3.) There is the total issue of this whole dispensation, placed in the midst of both, as arising from both: *They have slumbered their sleep*. When their hearts yielded, and their hands were lost, courage and power both taken away, what else should they do? Some take this for an expression of death, as it is sometimes used, *Psal. xiii. 3. Lighten mine eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death*. I rather conceive it to hold out that condition, which God threatneth to bring upon the enemies of his people, when he sends them a *spirit of slumber*, *Rom. xi. 8*. Now in such a condition two things are eminent:

[1.] Its weakness. A condition of slumber and sleep is a weak condition. A sleeping man is able to do nothing. *Jael* can destroy a drowsy *Sisera*.

[2.] Its vanity. Men in their sleep are apt to have foolish, vain fancies. This then is that which the Lord holds out concerning the enemies of his Church, his people, his ways, when their hearts are gone, and their hands gone. They shall be brought to a condition of weakness in respect of others, they shall not be able to beat them: and of vanity in themselves, they shall feed themselves with vain thoughts, like the dream of an hungry man, *Isa. xxix. 8. He dreameth, and behold he eateth; he waketh, and behold he is empty*. They please themselves for a little season with strong apprehensions of the accomplishment of their hearts lusts, and cobweb fancies; but the issue is shame and disappointment.

The words being opened, will yield us these three observations:

I. Men of stout hearts and strong hands, of courage and power, are often engaged against the Lord.

II. God suits the workings of providence for deliverance to the qualifications and actings of his opposers; their stout heart shall yield, their strong hands be lost.

III. Though men have courage, might, and success; yet when they engage themselves against the Lord, weakness and vanity shall be the issue thereof.

In the brief handling whercof I hope you shall find the word of God, and the works of God exceedingly suited.

I. Men of courage, power, and success, of eminent qualifications, are oftentimes engaged against the Lord, and the ways of the Lord.

I shall multiply neither testimonies nor instances of this truth; for that were but to set up a candle in the sun: the experience of all ages have made it good. One or two places may suffice. *Psal. lxxviii. 30. Rebuke the company of spear men, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people*. There are not only calves of the people, easily deluded, sottish men, but also multitudes of bulls, heady, high-minded bearing down all before them, throwing up all bounds and fences, laying all common to their lusts, not easily to be resisted; these also are amongst the adversaries of the ways of the Lord. The first open opposers of the ways of God, were giants, mighty men, and men of renown, *Gen. vi. 4*. At once two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, and men of renown, joined themselves in rebellion against the Lord, *Numb. xvi. 2*. And that

1. Because these very qualifications of a stout heart, strong hands, and former success are apt of themselves, if destitute of directing light and humbling grace, to puff up the spirits of men, and to inage them in ways of their own, contrary to the mind of the Lord. When men take advice of their stout hearts, strong hands, and former success, they are very evil counsellors. When *Jeremiah* advised the Jews from the Lord for their good, the proud men answer'd, they would not obey, *Jer. xliii. 2*. When *Pharoah* is made stout for his ruin, he cries; *Who is the Lord, that I should hear him?* *Exod. v. 2*. And for success, God makes the *Assyrian* the rod of his anger, sends him against the people of his wrath, with charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets, *Isa. x.*

Isa. x. 6. He goeth accordingly and prospereth; but when he hath so done, see what a conclusion he makes. He goes against *Jerusalem*, and cries, *Let not your God deceive you. Have the Gods of the nations delivered them*; and do you think so to be? *Isa. xxxvii. 10, 12.* From the success he had from God, he concluded the success he should have against him. Like those of late amongst ourselves, who having been partners with others in former successes, whilst they went upon the command of God, doubtless received in their stout hearts establishment, and strengthening to other undertakings, as if the God of the *parliament* could not help. *Amaziah*, king of *Judah*, wages war with *Edom*, and they are destroyed before him, *2 King. xiv. 7.* The war was of the Lord. Upon this he is lifted up, and causelessly provoketh *Jeboash*, king of *Israel*, *v. 8.* against the mind and will of God. *Jeboash* sends him word, that if the *thistle* pride itself against the *cedar*, the wild beast will tread it down, *v. 9.* But he had former success, and on he will go to his ruin. The stout hearted men (for a delivery from whose fury and folly, we desire this day to lift up the name of the Lord) having received help and assistance against *Edom*, will needs lift up the *thistle* against the *cedar*, act out of their own sphere, turn subjection into dominion, to their shame and sorrow. But it were better, their hearts should be filled with sorrow than the nation, and especially the people of God in the nation, with blood and confusion, ending in bondage and tyranny. And this is the first account of it, why men of such qualifications are engaged against the Lord. The qualifications themselves do set up for it, if destitute of divine light, and humbling grace. Such men will run upon God, and the thick bosses of his buckler.

2. God will have it so, that the greater may be his glory in the powerful protection and defence of his own, with the destruction, disappointment, and ruin of their enemies. If his enemies were all sottish, weak, foolish, childish until he makes them so, where would be the praise of his great name? When would there be *Nodus Deo vindice dignus*, work worthy of the appearance of the most high? But when there is a great mountain before *Zerubbabel*, *Zech. iv. 7.* a high, haughty, oppressing empire, to level that to a plain is glorious. When God will get himself a name, he raises up, not a poor, effeminate *Sardanapalus*, a poor sensual, hypocritical wretch, as some have been, the Lord will not make an open contest by such an one, (such as some of our sore oppressors have been) but he will raise up a *Pharaoh*, a crooked *leviathan*, a stout-hearted, cunning-headed, strong-handed oppressor; and he tells him, such a one as he, *for this very cause have I raised thee up, to shew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared in all the earth*, *Exod. ix. 16.* Thou art a fit subject (saith he) for me to exalt my glory in thy ruin. The *beast* is to make war with the *lamb*; and he shall not do it alone, God will give him in assistance. And who shall these be? Women, and children, and weak ones? No; he will put it into the heart of the kings of the earth *to give their power and strength to the beast*, *Rev. xvii. 17.* to break them in pieces. This will be glory indeed. All the opposers which formerly have risen, or at least most of them, have had the power to that height, as they have been exceedingly above all outwardly appearing means of being resisted. The breaking of the old monarchies, and of papal power, is a work meet for the Lord. And in this shall mainly consist the promised glory of the Church of Christ in after days, whose morning star I doubt not, is now upon us; the Lord will more immediately and visibly break the high, stout, haughty ones of the earth for the sake of his people, than in former times. Look upon all the glorious things that are spoken concerning *Zion* in the latter days, and you shall find them all interwoven with this still, *the shaking of heaven, the casting down of thrones and dominions, and mighty ones.* I mention this, because indeed I look upon this late mercy, as the after-drops of a former refreshing shower, as an appendix of good-will, for the confirming the former work which God had wrought. *Tho'*, saith he, *you have lain among the pots*, have been in a poor, defiled condition, a condition of bondage; *yet ye shall be as the wings of a dove cover'd with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold*, ye shall be made exceeding glorious. But how, or when shall this be? Why, *when the Almighty scattereth kings for her sake, then shall she be as white as snow in Salmon*, *Psal. lxxviii. 13, 14.* When God by his almighty power takes away so great opposers, then glory and beauty shall arise upon you. And this in some degree lies also at the bottom of the late dispensation of providence. Mens hearts were full of fear of a storm; yea, a storm was necessary, that some evidence might be

be given of the Lord's continuing his presence amongst you; that if hereafter we be forsaken, it may appear that it was for our own unbelief, unthankfulness and folly, and not for doing the work of the Lord. Now how was this expected? Why, this poor people, or that, unacquainted with the things of their peace, will rise and make opposition: no, saith the Lord, you shall not have so easy a trial; you shall have men of stout hearts, and strong hands, with many former successes on their shoulders; that when deliverance is given in, my name may be glorious indeed.

Use 1. Be not moved at the most formidable enemies, that may arise against you in the ways of God. *It was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim: and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind, Isa. vii. 2.* When strong combinations arise, how apt are we to shake and tremble before them; especially when they have some strangeness, as well as strength? That *Syria* should come against *Judah* is no wonder. But what, I pray, makes *Ephraim* too, their brother and fellow in former afflictions? Besides, *Syria* and *Ephraim* were always at a mortal difference among themselves. But they who agree in nothing else, usually consent in opposition to the ways of God. Then you shall have *Edom*, *Ammon*, *Amalek*, and *Assur* altogether of one mind, *Psal. lxxxiii. 6, 7, 8.* And the kings of the west that perpetually devour one another, yet have one mind in exalting the *beast*, and opposing the *lamb*, *Rev. xvii. 14.* As in our late troubles, there was a concurrence not only in the main of *Syria* and *Ephraim*, the two grand extremes, but also of innumerable particular fancies and designs; that if a man should have met them, like him in the fable, the lion, the ass, and the fox, he could not but wonder, *Quò iter unà facerent*, whither they were travelling together. But I say, when such combinations are made, how apt are we to shake and tremble? They are stout men, valiant men, and perhaps *Achitophel* is with them. Why, if they were not such, I pray, how should the Lord have any praise in the close of the dispensation? We would be delivered, but we care not that God should be glorified. If God's glory were dear to us, we should not care how high opposition did arise. Precious faith, where art thou fled? Had we but some few grains of it, we might see the rising of the greatest mountains to be but a means to make the name of God glorious, by removing them into the midst of the sea. Hath it not been thus in the days of old? The Lord humble us for our unbelief.

Use 2. Let men to whom the Lord hath given stout hearts, strong hands, and great success, watch carefully over their own spirits, lest they be led aside into any way against the mind of God. Great endowments are oftentimes great temptations. *The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the rock, whose habitation is on high, that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Obad. ver. 3.* Was it not the ruin of *Amaziah*, of whom notwithstanding it was said, *he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, 2 Chron. xxv. 2?* He who is heightened against the king of terrors, if he hath not humility, one of the chief of graces, will quickly choose himself paths of his own. Alas! poor creatures, if hearts and hands be, and God be not, what will it avail? But of this afterwards. I now proceed to the second observation.

II. God suits the workings and actings of providence for deliverance to the qualifications of the opposers.

Are they stout hearts? They shall be made to yield themselves. Are they men of might? They shall loose their power; they shall not find their hands. To this I shall speak very little. This is the cutting off of *Adonibezek's* toes and thumbs. God countermines them in their actings, and blows them up in their own mine. *In the thing wherein they deal proudly, he is above them, Exod. xviii. 11.* They shall not soar so high on the wings of their pride, but that still they shall find God uppermost. When they take counsel, and think to carry it by their advices, God saith; *I am wise also, and will bring evil, Isa. xxxi. 2.* When they think to carry it by an high hand, his strength shall appear against them. When *Herod* owns the blasphemy of being called a God, he shall rot and be eaten of worms, *Act. xii. 23.* *Pharaoh* cries: *Come on, let us deal wisely against Israel, Exod. i. 10.* He of all men shall play the fool, for his own ruin, and the ruin of his people, *Exod. xiv. 27, 28.* If *Sennacherib* boast of his mighty host, be sure he shall not find his hands. How evidently hath the Lord thus carried on his providence in the late dispensation? Were not many of the headless, heady undertakers, *robusti animo*, mighty of heart? And were they

they not forced to yield themselves? Yea, to *yield themselves to the spoil*? Were they not deep in their plotting? Doubtless they, or their seducers, had digged deep to lay their design; though of the generality of them, it cannot be said, as was of *Cæsar* and his companions, *accessere sobrii ad perdendum rempublicam*. They were brought to act things in very folly and confusion. They were great men of might; whence is it, they made no more opposition? The Lord laid their hands out of the way. Many reasons might be given of this, but I must pass to the last point.

III. Though men have courage, might, and former successes to accompany them, yet when they engage themselves against the Lord, or any way of his, vanity, weakness, and disappointment will be the issue thereof.

Can your heart indure, or can your hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with you, saith the Lord, *Ezek. xxii. 14. Let the potters strive with the potters of the earth; woe unto him that contendeth with his maker*, *Isa. xlv. 9. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered?* *Job ix. 4. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought, but the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever; he maketh the devices of the people of none effect*, *Psal. xxxiii. 10, 11. Whoever riseth up without him, or against him, shall fall and come to nothing.* This is a plain point, that we suppose ourselves exceedingly well versed in. But he who searcheth our spirits, and is acquainted with our inward parts, knows how great is our unbelief in this very thing. And therefore in tender condescension, he hath carefully provided for our support herein. A man would think one word once spoken were enough to convince and persuade the whole world of this truth; but the Lord knows, there must be line upon line, here a little and there a little, to give his own people any establishment herein. And therefore it is, that in so many places in his word he hath asserted and affirmed this one thing, *viz.* Let men be never so strong, powerful, and successful, if once they engage against him, they are utterly destroyed, unless he pluck them out of the snare. *Associate yourselves, &c. Isa. viii. 9.*

But you will say: engage against the Lord? That is true; whoever engageth against him, shall surely fall. But who is so mad as to do so? Very *Rabshakeh* himself affirms that he came not up to *Jerusalem* without the Lord, but that the Lord sent him to go up against the land to destroy it, *Isa. xxxvi. 10.* It is true he said so: and by this observation you have an answer to the Scripture. For though he said so, he lied before the Lord, and belied the Lord; his undertaking was against the Lord, and against his mind, as the sequel fully manifested. Many suppose they engage for God, when they engage against him. To engage against the Lord, is to engage against his mind and will. To undertake without the will of God, is enough to be the ruin of the best and stoutest, as we see in the case of *Josiah*. But to engage against him, who can do it, and stand when he is provoked? This then is that which neither stout hearts, nor strong hands shall ever be able to go through withal. For instance; to engage against that authority which God will own and defend, is successfully to engage against the Lord. Now because these are the days wherein the Lord will shake heaven and earth, beat the nations with a rod of iron, breaking much of the power of the world; it may be asked by some: how it shall be known, that any authority is such as the Lord will not destroy and overturn, but own it as a way of his own? I answer; to omit the rule of reason, law, and common established principles amongst men, all which give a great light unto the rule of walking in this case; I shall give you six scriptural significations *à posteriori* of such an authority, as the Lord will make as a brazen wall, or a rock in the sea, against which the waves dash with noise and fury, but are themselves broken to pieces.

1. If it be such as the Lord hath honoured with success and protection in great, hazardous and difficult undertakings for himself. Thus was it with *Moses*. Never had a leader of a people more murmurings, revilings, and rebellions against him. The story is obvious unto all. He was envied, hated, reproached of all sorts, from the princes of the congregation to the mixed multitude. But *Moses* had travelled thro' the sea and the desert with the Lord, and was encompassed with success and protection; and therefore all attempts against him shall be birthless and fruitless. This is one; but it will never do alone, unless conjoined with those that follow.

2. If the persons enjoying that authority abide to act for God, and not for themselves, after such success and protection. *Saul* began to act for God, and he vexed

all his enemies which way so ever he turned himself. But afterwards turning to himself, God left him to himself. *Cyrus*, how honoured, how anointed was he for his great undertaking against *Babylon*? But afterwards pursuing his own ambition, he was requited with blood, for the blood he sought. The Lord is with them that are with him, and whilst they are so. The establishment of the house of *Saul* is far from the Lord: for those that honour him, he will honour; and they that despise him shall be lightly esteemed, 1 *Sam.* ii. 30. There is no more certain sign in the world of persons devoted to ruin, or at least to their being divested of their authority, than that having followed God for a season in their enjoyment of success and protection, they turn aside to pursue their own ends, like *Jehu*. I could give you an example of this, as yet not much above half a year old. But when men undertake with the Lord, and for him, and having known his assistance therein, shall continue to lay out themselves in his ways; the Lord will then build them a house like *David*, which shall not be prevailed against.

Here I must give one caution by the way; that I am very far from countenancing any to move against the just and righteous authority, who discern not these things: the Lord forbid. Let men look to the rule of their obedience, which I have nothing to do withal at this time. I only describe such, as unto whom, if any dare to make opposition in an ordinary dispensation of providence, it will prove fruitless and vain.

3. The third thing is, that they subject their power to the power of the Lord Christ, who is Lord of lords, and King of kings. The *Psalmist* tells the rulers of the earth, that the reason of their spoiling is, that they do not kiss the Son, *Psal.* ii. 12. or yield unfeigned obedience to the mighty King, whom God hath set on his holy hill. God hath promised that he will give in the service of kings and nations to Christ in his kingdom, and therein shall be their security. When God puts it into the hearts of rulers, to rule according to the interest of Christ and his Gospel, and to seek the advancement of his scepter, they shall surely be as a fenced wall. I cannot stay to shew, what this interest of Christ is. In a word, it is the ordering, framing, carrying on of affairs, as is most conducive to the unravelling and destruction of the mystery of iniquity.

4. If they are supported by the prayer of a chosen people who seek their welfare, not for their own interest and advantage, but for the advantage of the Gospel, and the ways of Christ by them asserted. If God's own people pray for them in authority, that under them they may enjoy some share of their own, and obtain some ends suited to any carnal interest of theirs, God will reject those prayers. But when they seek their welfare, because it is discover'd to them, that in their peace the Gospel shall have peace and prosperity; surely the Lord will not cast out their prayers, nor shame the face of his poor supplicants.

5. If in sincerity, and with courage and zeal, they fulfil the work of their magistracy, in the administration of righteous judgment; especially in those great and unusual acts of justice, in breaking the jaws of the wicked and terrible, and delivering the spoil out of the teeth of the mighty, *Job* xxix. 17. Innumerable are the demonstrations of God's owning such persons.

6. If they have not the qualifications of that power, which in these latter days God hath promised to destroy. Now these are two; I will but name them unto you. *First*, Drinking the cup of fornication that is in the hand of the harlot, *i. e.* practising any false worship and forms invented besides the word. *Secondly*, Giving their power to the beast, or engaging in any ways of persecution against any of the ways of God, or his saints in those ways. That the Lord is about to shake, break, and destroy all such powers as these, I did not long since, by his assistance, here demonstrate.

And so have I compleated my instances that they who engage against such an authority as is attended with these qualifications, engage against the Lord. I could also give other instances in other ways and institutions of God; but I chose these as most accommodated to the season.

If now I should tell you, that notwithstanding all clamours to the contrary, these things for the main are found in your assemblies, thousands in the world would, yet I hope your own consciences would not, return the lye for so saying. But yet, though the Lord seems to bear witness to some integrity in his late dispensations, I shall only pray,

pray, that what is wanting may be supply'd; that you may never want the like protection, in the like distress.

Come we now briefly to the reasons why those who oppose such authority shall not succeed. And it were an easy labour to multiply reasons hereof. The sovereignty, the power, all the attributes of God would furnish us with arguments: I shall omit them all; only touch upon two, that are couched in the text.

They shall have no better issue, because (1.) The Lord will take away their stout hearts, whereby they are supported. (2.) He will take away their strong hands, whereby they are confirmed: and when hearts and hands are gone, they also are gone.

(1.) He will take away their stout hearts, that they shall no more be able to carry them out to any success in their great undertakings. He will break that wheel at the very fountain, that it shall no more be the spring of their proceedings.

Now this the Lord usually doth one, or more of these four ways. [1.] He fills them with fury and madness; so taking away their order. [2.] He fills them with folly and giddiness; so taking away their counsel. [3.] He fills them with terror and amazement; so depriving them of their courage. Or, [4.] with contrition and humility; so changing their spirits.

[1.] He fills them with fury and madness, taking away their order, which is the tye and cement of all societies in all undertakings. *Tho' all the people of the earth, faith the Lord, be gathered together against Jerusalem, they shall not prosper: And why so? I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness,* Zech. xii. 4. Madmen have often great strength, and with it great fury; but know not how to use it, except to their own ruin. When they think to do the greatest mischief, they cut and gash themselves. Thus the Lord threateneth those, who in outward profession are his own people, when they walk contrary to him. *The Lord shall smite thee with madness of heart, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways,* Deut. xxviii. 28, 29. Because smitten with madness, therefore they shall not prosper. This is that untamable fury, whereby men are carried out to sinful, destructive enterprises, as the horse rushes into the battle. A judgment which some men vocally, as well as actually at this day proclaim to be upon their spirits. They cry their blood boils, and their hearts rage for revenge; reviling those in authority whereby to foment, *Acts* xix. Hence they stir up men for the engaging in such designs, as if accomplished, in the judgment of all men not mad like themselves, would certainly prove ruinous to themselves and others. And in this frame they delight, of it they boast, not once considering that it is a badge and character of men, whom God will disappoint and destroy in their proceedings; it being nothing but the working of that evil spirit, which came upon *Saul*, stirring him up to rage and fury, when once the meek, calming spirit of the Lord departed from him.

[2.] He will fill them with folly and giddiness; so taking away their counsel. Foolish and giddy undertakers do but conceive chaff, and bring forth stubble: *The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived, they have also seduced Egypt; the Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof, and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit,* Isa. xix. 13, 14. This he calls taking away the spirit of *Egypt*, and destroying the counsel thereof, *ver.* 3. There is no means of ruin, destruction, and disappointment that God doth more frequently threaten than this: he will take wisdom from the wise, and then pour contempt upon the spirit of princes: when to their madness, he adds blindness, to their fury, folly, to their rage, giddiness, what can be the issue but such as is expressed: *They shall stagger like a drunken man in his vomit?* Stand before him, and he'll pour his filth upon you; let him alone, and he and it will quickly tumble to the ground. What, I pray, can be expected from mad, blind, furious, foolish, raging, giddy men? Should a man use these expressions of any, it would be said he railed; yet God hath spoken it that all undertakers against him shall be so and no otherwise. Now hence ariseth upon the spirits of such men a twofold effect: *First*, they shall not be able to advise rationally against others: Nor, *Secondly*, shall they be able to receive suitable advice from others: they shall be able neither to make out counsel to support them in the way wherein they are, nor to take in counsel for their reducing to better paths. If this were not evident in the late dispensation of the Lord towards poor creatures, setting up themselves against the Lord, then never did any providence speak plain in any latter age.

[3.] He will fill them with fear and amazement; so taking away their courage. This God caused to fall upon an whole host at one time; that without seeing an enemy, they ran and fled, and lost all they had, and the spoil, 2 *Kings* vii. 6, 7. And he threatens that in such a condition, he will make men like women, they shall be afraid and fear, *Isa.* xix. 16. Yea, this is the way of God's usual dealing; first, he overcomes the spirit of his enemies, and then their armies or force; and the Lord is magnified therein, as is fully set out, *Exod.* xv. 14, 15, 16. The hearts and spirits of men are all in the hand of God; he can pluck them in, or let them out, as seems good unto him; make him that was mighty one day, the next day to be of no power: what is left of fury, folly shall devour; and what is left of folly, fear shall consume; and the purpose of the Lord shall be established.

[4.] If he have any favour for them, and so will not proceed in these ways of revenge against them, which would end in their speedy ruin: he will give them contrition and humility, so changing them. What a clear testimony of this did he give in the business of *Jacob* and *Esau*: *Esau* resolves and threatens his death upon the first opportunity, *Gen.* xxvii 41. an opportunity is put into his hands by *Jacob's* return into *Canaan*, chap. xxxii. means of revenge he is ready; furnished withal, and comes out accordingly with a band of cut-throats for the purpose, in the same chapter. What should any man now rationally expect, but that poor *Jacob* must certainly be ruin'd, and the mother slain with the children? In an instant the Lord toucheth the heart of *Esau*, and all his menaces of revenge issued in tears and expressions of love and joy, chap. xxxiii. 4. It is to be rejoiced in that the stout hearts of some men are changed upon their disappointment, and the issue of the mercy is no loss to you, to the nation, and themselves therein: tho' truly to them it had been an argument of greater love, had the Lord graciously bent their spirits unto it before. But by his infinite wisdom he hath accomplished his holy will.

Now in one, more, or all of these ways, will the Lord proceed with the mighty of heart, that set up themselves against him, until he take away their hearts, and make them useless; that either willingly, or unwillingly, *they shall yield themselves even to the spoil.*

(2.) He will not only take away their hearts, but also their hands; he will not only dispirit them, but he will also disarm them; he will take not only wisdom from their hearts, but the wheels from their chariots. He is the God of the power of men, as well as of the spirits of men. Will he continue power and strength unto men to use it against him that gives it?

Use 1. To discover the ground of God's late dispensation, in taking away the hearts from the stout, and hands from the mighty, bringing them into a condition of weakness and vanity. Their undertakings were against the Lord, and their hearts could not endure, neither could their hands be strong.

I shall give some instances in their undertaking against the Lord.

(1.) In their declared enmity to the ministry of the Gospel: not to the persons of ministers, because engaged in some faction in the state; wherein perhaps many may be opposed, and that from the Lord: nor yet because of their persuasion for the administration of ordinances, after this or that form; which often ariseth to very great animosities: the Lord pardon them unto his people: but because in general they do administer ordinances. Now certainly there is so much of God in that administration, that if they be opposed, not for other causes, or upon other pretences, but *eo nomine*, as administrators of ordinances, that opposition is made to God himself. It was part of the end of Christ's ascension, that he might bestow those gifts upon them, which they do enjoy, *Ephes.* iv. 8. And shall the fury of men, make the work of God, the purchase of Christ, of none effect? Doubtless in this respect, God will make as many as are sincere, a *fenced brazen wall*, *Jer.* xv. 20. Men may batter their hands, and beat out their brains against them; but they shall not prevail. It is true, as many of them are pleased in these days to engage themselves in several parties; so if they do close and act with them that are pernicious to the commonwealth, all inconvenience that lighteth upon them, is from themselves; their profession gives them no sanctuary from opposition: but when they are envied, *eo nomine*, as administrators of ordinances, not in such or such a way, but as ordinances; shall not the Lord plead for this thing? Now that this was aimed at by some, I suppose none can doubt. The Lord open the eyes of them who in this delive-

rance have received deliverance, but will not see it. I fear some men had almost rather perish, than be delivered not in their own way. Envy in some men will out-balance safety. Alas! we are proud beggars, when we will refuse the mercy of God, if we may not appoint the hand whereby it shall be bestowed.

(2.) Against the spiritual ordinances of God themselves. These are the carved work, which they aimed to break down with their axes and hammers. Christ hath said, *I will build my Church*. Their voice was, Down with it, down with it even to the ground. Poor creatures! they dashed themselves against the rock. Is this a time, think you, to engage against all ordinances, when the Lord *Jesus* is joining battle with all the world for their abuse of them? And is vindicating them in order to more purity, beauty, lustre, power, efficacy, and peace, than ever yet he adorned them withal? You were not wise, poor souls, to discern the seasons! What! no time to pluck down, but when Christ himself is building? Ah! turn your weapons against *Babylon*; it will prove far the more thriving warfare. Let *Zion* alone, if but for your own sakes. *Jerusalem* will prove a burdensome stone to all that take her up. You have received more loss in a week of days from Christ in this nation, than you would have done in a week of years from antichrist in another. God will make them that shall go for *Ireland*, sensible of this truth: see *Psal.* xlviii. 12, 13, 14.

(3.) Principally and immediately against magistracy; if not in the abstract, yet openly as established in the hands of those, whom the Lord hath owned in the darkest day that ever this nation saw. It is the hope of my soul, that the Lord hath born witness, that they have the sixfold qualification before mentioned. And why would they have at once destroyed the *Parliament*, and their own *Commander*? Look upon the end of their common workmen: was it not that every one might have enjoyed their lust for a season? Of the more crafty: was it not to get themselves power, to attempt their folly, and execute their fury? Look upon the end of the work: was it not to have wrapt us in confusion for a few months, and then to have given us up to the revengeful will of enraged enemies? So that truly there is but one thing wonderful to me in all this business, that God should take away the hearts and hands of these men in this enterprize, and that is, that he should do it in mercy for such an unthankful, unworthy, unbelieving people, as we are. In this is he forever to be admired and blessed. At thy rebuke, O God of *Jacob*, both the chariot and the horses have failed.

Use 2. If this be the cause why *they have slumbered their sleep*; be instructed, ye that are rulers of this nation, in the ways of peace, protection, and safety: be in the ways of God, and do the things of God, and no weapon that is formed against you shall ever prosper. Many protections and deliverances you have had in your actings for him. Hath he not deserved at your hands to be trusted and feared all your days, with all your power? As my heart hath always been towards the governours in *Israel*, who willingly offered themselves among the people; so truly my heart never more trembled over them, than now. Oh! where shall we find hearts fit to receive so many mercies, as have been given into our bosoms? Oh! where shall we have hearts large enough to receive all these mercies? The oil ceased when the vessel would hold no more. All my hope and confidence is, that God will work for his name's sake. I could exhort you to sundry particulars, and lay down several paths of God, walking wherein you shall be sure to find peace and safety; as especially that you would regard that which God hath honoured, whereunto the opposition which he had resolved to make void, was made.

Use 3. You that are men of courage, and might, and success, stout of heart, and strong of hand, be watchful over yourselves, lest you should in any thing be engaged against the Lord. The ways of the Lord are your locks, step but out of them, they'll be cut, and you'll become like other men, and be made a prey and a mocking to the uncircumcised that are round about. These eminencies you have from God, are eminent temptations to undertakings against God, if not seasoned with grace and watchfulness. Ah! how many baits have Satan and the world suited to these qualifications. *Sampson* shook himself, and went out, saying, *I will do as at other times*; but he knew not that the Lord was departed from him. You may think when you are walking in paths of your own, that you will do as at other times; but if your strength be departed away, what will be the end?

Use 4.

Use 4. Our last use should be of instruction in respect of God, that you may see, both what he can do, and trust him; and consider what he hath done, and bless him. For the first; weapons of all sorts, men of all sorts, judgments of all sorts are at his command and disposal: see it in this *Psal.* And for what he hath done; if there be any virtue in the presence of Christ in his ordinances; if any worth in the Gospel; if any sweetness in carrying on the work of Christ's revenge against *Babylon*; if any happiness in the establishment of the peace and liberty of a poor nation, purchased with so much blood, and so long a contest; if any content in the disappointment of the predations and threats of God's enemies, and his people's; if any refreshment to our bowels, that our necks are yet kept from the yoke of lawless lust, fury, and tyranny; if any sweetness in a hope that a poor, distressed handful in *Ireland* may yet be relieved; if any joy that God hath given yet another testimony of his presence amongst us; if it be any way valuable, that the instruments of our deliverance be not made the scorned object of mens revengeful violence; if any happiness, that the authority under which we enjoy all these mercies, is not swallowed up: is it not all in the womb of this deliverance? And who is he that hath given it into our bosom?

S E R M O N XIII.

The Sin and Judgment of Spiritual Barrenness.

EZEK. xlvii. 11.

But the miry places thereof, and the marishes thereof, shall not be healed, they shall be given to salt.



HIS prophesy contains a vision of the glorious, holy, Gospel state of the Church under the representation of a most glorious temple, incomparably excelling that built of old by *Solomon*; an exposition whereof we have, 2 *Cor.* iii. 6, 7, 8, &c.

The beginning of this chapter sets out the way and means of the calling and gathering of Gospel Churches, whose worship is to be so glorious; and this is under a vision of *waters issuing out of the sanctuary*, to heal and quicken all places to which they came.

By the *waters* here mentioned is the preaching of the Gospel intended. And we may observe of them, *First*, Their rise: which was from the *sanctuary*. *Secondly*, Their progress: they increased until they became a *river* that none could pass over. *Thirdly*, Their effects or efficacy: they *healed all waters* where they came, and *quicken*ed, or caused to live, *the fishes* that were in them.

I must not long insist on these particulars.

First, The house or temple from whence these waters issue, may be taken two ways.

1. Mystically to denote only the presence of God. God dwelt in his temple, thence come these waters, from his presence. He sends out the word of the Gospel for the conversion and healing of the nations, *Psal.* cx. 2. Or

2. Figuratively, and that either, for the place where the temple of old stood, that is, *Jerusalem*, as the preaching of the Gospel was to go forth from *Jerusalem*, and the sound of it from thence to proceed unto all the world; as *Isa.* xli. 27. chap. lli. 7.

Acts i.

Act. i. 4, 8. Or, for the Church of Christ and his Apostles, the first glorious, spiritual temple unto God, whence these waters issued.

Secondly, Their progress, which is described by degrees, it being at first small, few men preaching it, and to a few; but afterwards increasing, until it filled the whole earth.

Thirdly, The effects mentioned or ascribed unto these waters are two, quickning and healing; which I shall not in general speak farther unto, because I shall do it in the opening of my text.

In the words of the text you have the state and condition of those places, whether the waters of the sanctuary do come, and the effects before described unto them, are not produced. For so the words are to be read: *That shall not be healed.*

We have here a description of some lands or places whereunto the holy waters do come. *First*: They are *miry and marshy places*. *Secondly*, The event of the waters coming to them; they are *not healed*. *Thirdly*, the consequent of that event; they are *given unto salt*.

I shall in a few words lay open the allegory, or parable unto you.

First, By the *waters* of the sanctuary, I told you, is meant the preaching of the Gospel, that quickning and healing word which the Lord sends out to gather his Church unto himself all the world over; to call his saints to that glorious, Gospel, spiritual worship, which is here described in this vision of a temple.

Secondly, The *miry and marshy places*, where these waters come, are such, where persons cleave inseparably and incurably to their lusts and sins, so that they are not healed by the word. The healing word of the Gospel comes, but they receive it not; the water flows over them, they drink it not in, are not quickened, nor healed by it.

Thirdly, To be *given unto salt*, is to be left unto barrenness, *Deut. xxix. 23. Judg. ix. 45. Jer. xvii. 6.*

The figurative sense of the passage thus explained, will afford us the following observations.

Obs. I. God is pleased oftentimes to send the *waters* of the sanctuary to *miry and marshy places*, that *shall never be healed* by them, nor made fruitful. Or, God in his infinite wisdom is pleased to send the preaching of the word unto some places, wherein it shall not put forth its quickning and sanctifying power, and virtue upon the souls of them that hear it.

II. All places in the world are barren, unsound and unhealthy before the coming of the waters of the sanctuary upon them. Or, the souls of all men are spiritually dead and full of woful distempers, until they are quickened and healed by the dispensation of the Gospel. The word must come and heal them.

III. The waters of the sanctuary are healing waters. Or, the word of the Gospel is in its own nature a quickning, healing, sanctifying, saving word, to them who receive it.

IV. Where the *waters* of the sanctuary come, and the land *is not healed*, that land *is given up* of the Lord *to salt* or barrenness for ever. Or, where the word of the Gospel is, by the infinitely wise disposal of God, preached unto a place, or persons, and they receive it not, so as to have their sinful distempers healed by it, they are usually after a season, given up by the righteous judgment of God unto barrenness, and everlasting ruin.

It is this last proposition, as that which is the direct design and scope of the place, that I intend to insist principally upon. But yet I shall speak somewhat to the former.

I. God is pleased oftentimes in his infinite wisdom to send the preaching of the word unto some places, wherein it shall not put forth its quickening and sanctifying power and virtue upon the souls of them that hear it.

The whole Scripture, and whole story of the providence of God, in sending the Gospel abroad in the world, bears witness to this truth. It was his way from the foundation of the world, and continueth to this very day. Hence was that complaint of the prophet, *Isa. liii. 1. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* The Gospel is preached to them that believe not the

port thereof. And *chap. xlix. 4. Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought.* But we need no greater instance, nor any other than that of our Saviour; who spent the greatest part of his ministry in preaching to them who were never healed, never converted, nor sanctified by his word. That account he gives of his work, *Matth. xi. 21, 22, 23, 24. Woe unto thee Chorazin, Woe unto thee Bethsaida, &c.*

Now though there be no searching into the depths of the counsels of God; yet there appear many reasons, wherein his wisdom in this dispensation doth shine forth. As,

1. He doth it principally, because in those places where the word is rejected by the generality of the people; yet there may be some secret, poor souls belonging to the election of grace, whom God will have gathered, and called home to himself. So for their sakes, though in the world they are taken no notice of, the word shall be preached unto multitudes, *Amos ix. 9. I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.* The grains of *Israel* must be preserved through all the nations of the earth, that not one grain may be lost. Thus *Paul* preaches the Gospel at *Philippi*, *Acts xvi. 12, 13.* And what entertainment meets it withal? He and his companions are taken, and beaten, and cast into prison, sore hurt and wounded, *v. 22, 23.* Why then was it that the Gospel must be preached there? Why, there was a stranger come to that town, a poor woman, one *Lydia*, that dwelt at *Thyatira*, and she was to be converted, and brought home to God, *v. 14.* So at *Athens*, *chap. xvii. 34.* And the Apostle affirms, that he *endured all things for the elect's sake*, *2 Tim. ii. 10.* Here and there a poor, despised person is designed to be called.

2. God doth it for a testimony against them that receive it not, and to leave them inexcusable at the last day, *Mark vi. 11. Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them.* The word is to be preached, and witness, as it were, is to be taken upon it, that it was preached, that men may be left without excuse at the last day. As our Saviour pleads concerning his own preaching to the pharisees, *John xv. 22. Had I not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin.* God will cause men to be without excuse, by that tender of mercy which is made unto them in the Gospel. It shall be for a testimony against them at the last day.

Use. Let not men boast themselves in the outward enjoyment of the word, nor rest themselves in it. It were well indeed if all were believers to whom the word is preached; if all lands were healed, where the waters of the sanctuary come. But the Holy Ghost tells us, they are not so, *Heb. iv. 2. The word preached did not profit them. Capernaum was exalted unto heaven, in the use of means, but brought down to hell, for the neglect of them.* Let men look to themselves; God hath various ends in sending the Gospel. The Lord knows what will be the end of *England's* enjoying the Gospel so long as it hath done. Sad symptoms appear of a tremendous issue. But I shall speak of this afterwards.

II. The souls of all men are spiritually dead, and full of woful distempers, until they are quickened and healed by the dispensation of the Gospel.

The waters of the sanctuary must come to quicken them, and heal them. They are distemper'd therefore and wofully disorder'd, before the coming of these waters. So the Apostle informs us, *Tit. iii. 3, 4, 5. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another; but after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* Before the Gospel grace comes to heal and cleanse them, this is the state and condition of men, as it is more largely described by the Apostle, *Rom. i. v. 18. to the end.*

I shall not stay to mention all the particular distempers that rage in some, and that rule and reign in all, before the coming of the Gospel; as darkness, blindness, ignorance, worldly-mindedness, sensuality, hatred of God, envy and malice, which are fixed in the souls of men by presumption, and self-righteousness. There is nothing in them of spiritual life or holiness, of purity or zeal, nothing that is acceptable

or pleasing unto God. But to set forth this to the utmost were to describe the whole natural condition of men, which is not my present work, and therefore I shall not farther insist on it.

III. The word of the Gospel is in its own nature, a quickning, healing, sanctifying, saving word to them who receive it.

They bring Christ along with them, the great physician of souls, who alone is able to cure a sin-sick soul. They bring mercy with them to pardon sinners; that *the inhabitants of the land may no more say, they are sick, having their sins forgiven them*, Isa. xxxiii. 24. They bring grace with them to cure all the distempers of lusts, Isa. xi. 5, 6, 7. Tit. ii. 11, 12.

These things I have only touched upon, and proceed now to the *fourth observation*, on which I chiefly propos'd to insist.

IV. Where the *waters* of the sanctuary come, and the land *is not healed*, that land is *given up* of the Lord to *salt* and barrenness for ever. Or, where the word of the Gospel is preached unto a place or persons, and they receive it not, so as to have their sinful distempers healed by it, they are given up by the righteous judgment of God unto barrenness and everlasting ruin.

To clear this proposition, I shall shew, 1. What I mean by the coming of the waters of the sanctuary, or the preaching of the Gospel to a place, or persons. 2. What by healing their sinful distempers. 3. What by being given up to barrenness and ruin.

1. By the coming of the healing waters of the sanctuary, I intend not the occasional preaching of a Sermon, although this be sufficient to justify God in the rejection of any person or people. In the first preaching of the Gospel, the refusal of one sermon lost many their souls unto all eternity. When the Lord *Jesus* sent out his Disciples to preach the tidings of everlasting peace, he commanded them to pass through the towns, cities and villages, and to offer them peace and mercy in the word of truth; which if they received not, they were to shake off the dust of their feet against them, *Matth. x. 12, 13, 14, 15. Luke x. 8.* But, O, the unspeakable patience of Christ to many in the world, where the word is continued oftentimes for a very long season, and the salvation tendred therein despised! But this is that which I intend, as the rule of the dispensation mentioned: namely, when God by his providence, doth cause the word to be preached for some continuance, and to the revelation of his *whole counsel*; as *Paul* affirmed himself to have done at *Ephesus*, *Acts xx. 27.* where he had abode above a year.

Nor do I mean any waters, but the waters of the sanctuary; not any preaching, but the preaching of the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, which *Paul* affirms to be his work, *Ephes. iii. 8.* All waters are not the waters of the sanctuary; all preaching is not the preaching of the sanctuary. There is preaching in the world, wherein God and the souls of men are no more concerned, than in an oration of an ancient heathen. Many undertake to be preachers, who never *stood in the counsel of God*, as he complains, *Jer. xxiii. 22.* who never received of the Spirit of Christ, nor knew his mind, blind leaders of the blind. The children of *Zion* are promised under the Gospel, that they shall be all taught of God. And we have men undertaking to be teachers of them, who never learned any thing of Christ. A wicked generation of soul-murderers, for which cursed work they every day invent new engines, whom the Lord's soul abhors. So their condition and portion, *Ezek. xxxiv. 3, 4, &c.* I mean therefore a dispensation of the word according to the mind of Christ, the due unfolding of the mystery of the Gospel. This is the coming I intend.

2. What is meant by their sinful distempers not being healed? Look what the waters of the sanctuary come to do, if that be not effected, they are not healed.

Now there are two effects here ascribed unto the waters of the sanctuary. (1.) They quicken, and give new life, *v. 9.* A natural life they had before, but these give them another life. (2.) Healing, as the waters of *Jericho* by *Elisha*, *2 Kings ii. 21.* Where these effects are not produced, that is the condition described, that is the state of these *miry and marshy places, they are not healed.*

(1.) Men are not quickned; they receive not a new spiritual life; they are not so brought to the knowledge of God. It is not enough that men have their affections wrought upon, or their lives in some measure reformed, unless they are quickned; unless they receive a new spiritual life by the word, they are as the unhealed places over whom the curse here mentioned hangs. (2.) The

(2.) The healing of these quickned souls, consists in the curing and mortifying of their sinful distempers. This follows the other. Where there is life, there will be healing. Let not men pretend that they live spiritually, if their lusts be not healed. If men are proud, worldly, sensual, they are dead also; there is no effect of the waters of the sanctuary upon them. If men are not made holy, humble, believing, zealous, if they receive not the spirit of prayer and faith, they are not healed.

This is the condition of the *marshy and miry places* here mentioned. God in his infinite wisdom and goodness, causeth the Gospel to be dispensed among a people, to be preached, where they do, or may, and ought to attend unto it. But they are not converted by the word, not sanctify'd by it, but continue in their old state and condition; he that was filthy is filthy still; he that was unrighteous is so still; he that was in the mire of the world and sin, is so still.

3. What is the lot and portion of such persons? Why, *they shall be given to salt*; that is, as I have shewed, to barrenness, fruitlessness, unprofitableness, and eternal ruin.

This is the meaning of the proposition; and it is a dreadful word, which yet is true, and will prove so at the last day. Woe to the *miry and marshy places* of the world: woe to the persons and places to whom the waters of the sanctuary have come, and they are not healed.

I shall not need to insist much on the proof of the proposition, the Scripture so abounds with testimonies of it. But I shall do these three things. 1. Name some places that plainly speak the same truth. 2. Shew the degrees in which God proceeds usually in this great work, in giving up unprofitable hearers to ruin. And, 3. Give the grounds of it.

1. For other Scriptures which assert the same truth; take *Prov. i. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh: when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof: therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.* *Prov. xxix. 1. He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* *Luke xiii. 6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none, &c.* So *Heb. x. 28, 29, 30.* and *2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.*

2. For the degrees of rejection, see *Ezek. x. 18. chap. xi. 23.* and *Heb. vi. 8. But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.* They are first rejected, then cursed, and lastly burned. But

3. That which I shall principally insist upon, is to shew the ways whereby God doth usually proceed in giving up such persons to barrenness, and so to everlasting ruin.

(1.) He casts them out of his care; he will be at no more charge nor cost with them, nor about them. So *Heb. vi. 8.* the land is *deserted, rejected*; the owner will take no more care or pains about such an unprofitable piece of land: he will till it no more, dress it no more; but leave it to its own barrenness. God is the great husbandman, *John xv. 1.* When a miry place is not healed, he will cast it out of his husbandry. So *Ezek. xxiv. 13.* They have had their time and season, and are not purged; therefore *they shall be purged no more.* *Jer. vi. 29, 30. The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain; for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.* This the Lord Christ declares to be his way of proceeding with them. *Zech. xi. 8, 9. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Then said I, I will not feed you; that that dieth, let it die, and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.* A sad parting the Lord knows. They give up Christ; he gives up them; and their meeting will be infinitely more sad to them. Now this the Lord doth several ways.

[1.] He will sometimes utterly remove the Gospel from them; turn the stream of the waters of the sanctuary, that they shall come to them no more. So he threatned the

the Church at *Ephesus* of old, *Rev. ii. 5. Remember from whence thou art fallen, &c. or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place.* They shall have the light of the word no more, it shall be removed and taken from them. Ah, how many places lie under this woful judgment of God at this day, this sentence of being given up to salt forever! Places there are in the world, that have enjoyed the word at God's appointed season, or at least, the tender of it, and opportunity to enjoy it; but continuing unprofitable under it; what is now their state and condition? God hath left them to that sore judgment, that they themselves should be made instrumental to cast out the word from amongst them; like the foolish woman pulling down the house with their own hands; and so have got darkness for a vision, and they that would not rejoice in the truth, and in the light, do now through the tremendous judgment of God, triumph in darkness and in a thing of nought.

It is true, the Gospel may be sometimes taken for a season from a people for their trial and exercise, and not penally: it may be driven from them and not absolutely sinned away. Now as the Lord hath many glorious ends in such a dispensation; so it may easily be known whether people have lost the Gospel only for a season in a way of trial; or penally as a beginning of their being given up to salt and barrenness. As

1.) They that are deprived for a season of Gospel enjoyments for their trial and exercise, are sensible of the displeasure of God in that dispensation, and greatly humble themselves under his hand on that account. They say as the Church in *Micah vii. 9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me.* They look on this as the greatest calamity and trial that can befall them; whereas they that lose it penally, are either very little concerned about it, or do greatly rejoice at it: the word tormented them, and they are glad they are freed from it, *Rev. xi. 10. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.* Some never rejoice more, than when they are got quit of the Gospel; and others are like *Gallio*. Now when such as these have the word taken from them, and are no way sensible of the displeasure of the Lord in it, nor do humble themselves before him on that account; it is a certain evidence that God is giving them up into a state of salt, that is, barrenness and eternal ruin.

2.) They that are deprived of it, for a season in a way of trial, have no rest, but are earnest with the Lord for the return of it, *1 Sam. vii. 2. The ark was gone; and though they had peace and plenty, and all things else in abundance; yet all will not satisfy them, the ark is absent, that pledge of God's presence, and they lamented after him.* So is it with these; let them have peace, or liberty, or prosperity, all is one; if they have not the ark, if they have not the Gospel and ordinances of God, they can take no rest, but are still lamenting after the Lord, still longing after the enjoyment of his word. *David* doth excellently express this frame of heart, *Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* He was driven from the ordinances of God, the waters of the sanctuary came not to him. But now they from whom the word is taken penally, are no way troubled about it, nor do long after it; they rejoice in what they have in the room of it; are exceedingly well pleased without it. Let them have an increase of corn, and wine, and oil; let them have their lusts and their sports, their formalities and follies, they care not whether ever they hear of the word of the Gospel any more. Such men are certainly entering into a condition of salt, of barrenness, and ruin.

3.) They who are deprived of the word for a season, for their trial, have an high estimation and value of their mercy and privilege who enjoy it. They do not think the proud happy, nor envy at prosperous wickedness, nor bow in their hearts before the *Hamans* of the earth. But those they think blessed, who enjoy the word, and the presence of God therein. This our Saviour teaches them to esteem, *Luke xi. 28. But he said, yea rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.* *David* doth excellently set out this frame of heart, *Psal. lxxxiv. 4. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee, Selah.* I am, saith he, a poor outcast, deprived of thy word and ordinances: O the blessed condition of those who enjoy

enjoy them! Let them be what they will as to their outward state, they are in a blessed condition, if they may dwell in thy house, enjoy the privileges of the spiritual house of God, and his worship in the Gospel. This is the frame of such persons; those only they esteem blessed, who are refreshed with the waters of the sanctuary: but none are more despised by those, from whom the Gospel is judicially removed. It is the great, the mighty, the rich, the sensual that they esteem blessed; for those others they esteem as the dirt or the mire.

Now hence it is, that God may at the same time remove his Gospel from a place, judicially from some, and by a way of trial from others, whereby these contrary effects are produced: some are humbled under the hand of the Lord; mourn after his presence; and account them blessed who enjoy his ordinances: others triumph and rejoice in their condition, look upon it as good and blessed, at least are little concerned in the dispensation that God is dealing with them in. And as the Lord doth good to the former by this exercise, preparing them also for farther mercies, in a greater estimation of his word, and profiting under it when enjoyed: so to the other, this is the entrance of their ruin; they are cast out of the care of God; and you never see such a people afterwards obtain mercy.

[2.] God doth this sometimes, though he causeth the word to be continued unto them, by restraining the efficacy of it, that it shall not profit them. Men may have lived out their season, that God hath given them to be healed in; and yet God have work to do in that place where they live, so that the word must be preached; some poor souls amongst them are to be quickened or healed, called or edified; so that he will not turn away the course of these holy waters, but continue the dispensation of the Gospel. But as for those, who have withstood their season of healing, and are cast out of the care of God, God will so order things, that the word shall have no power upon them. Now though the righteous judgment of God have a hand in this matter; yet by his permission, their own lusts are the immediate cause of it. As

1.) They shall have some prejudices against them, by whom the Gospel is dispensed in the power and purity of it, which shall keep them from attending unto, or profiting by their message. So in the days of *Ahab*, there were four hundred preachers that he had a mind to hear; but they were all false prophets, teachers of lies, idolatrous and superstitious: only there were two prophets of the Lord, *Elijah* the *Tishbite*, and *Micaiah* the son of *Imlah*; and both these he looked upon as his enemies, as persons not well affected unto him; so that he would believe nothing of what they preached. So of *Elijah*, 1 Kings xxi. 20. and of *Micaiah*, chap. xxii. 8. So shall it befall many whom God will leave to *salt*, because the season of their healing hath been withstood; though the word be preached, they shall have prejudices against the dispensers of it, so that they shall not profit by them. And little do they think that these prejudices and hard thoughts are chains and fetters to keep them in unto the judgment of the great day. And of this nature also are other prejudices, that men have.

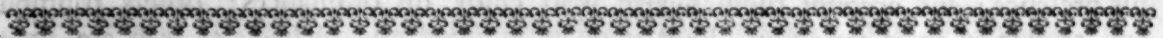
2.) He will suffer them to be unconquerably hardened in the love of some sin or lust, which shall keep off the power of the word from their hearts. So the ground here that is not healed, is said to be *miry and marshy*; such as hath a mixture of filth incorporated with it, sufficient to repel all the virtue of the healing waters of the sanctuary. Thus we see men every day so furiously set upon their lusts, sports, and sensuality, that they hate and are filled with madness and rage against all that would persuade them to sobriety: much more doth the word of the Gospel torment them, so that they rise with fury against it; and this keeps them from profiting by it. *They are given to salt.*

3.) God withdraws the efficacy of his spirit in the dispensation of the word, that it shall not have that strength and power on them as upon others. God sends his word towards his own in a way of covenant, and then it is always accompanied with his spirit, *Isa.* lix. 21. And where God dealeth with men in covenant mercy, these go together. But now when he casts men out of his care, though the word may be preached to their ear, because of some others whom he yet cares for; yet he hath said concerning them, that his *spirit shall strive with them no more*: and thence it is that the word makes no impression on them: its healing virtue is as to them withheld.

And this is the first thing the Lord doth to such poor creatures as he leaves *to salt*, to barrenness and ruin, for despising the season and means of their healing. He casts them out of his care, as to the dispensation of the word.



S E R M O N XIV.



WE shall now proceed to the *uses*.

Use 1. Wonder not if you see a diversity of success in preaching of the word: some receive it with joy; the most despise it as a thing of nought. Whence is this difference? Multitudes are rejected of God, cast out of his care, barrenland, he will till them no more. A cursed state! Marvel not that many refuse to hear the word, that they love lies; they are given up of God to their hearts lusts. Marvel not that the word which they hear affects them no more; the power of the spirit is withheld from them; multitudes are thus cast out of the care of God, and tokens of the plague are upon them: they like their condition, rejoice and triumph in it, think none so happy as themselves, and despise them that love the waters of the sanctuary: all which are tokens of this sore plague. Can they expel the Gospel from any place? Can they quench the light that is in it? Can they triumph over the ways of God? They suppose they have gotten a great victory. This is not an ordinary judgment: they are, poor creatures, assuredly cast out of the care of God; *they are given to salt*; and it is a miracle of mercy, if ever any of them be healed.

O, it is a woful thing to look on a place or persons that give evidences of their withstanding the season of their healing, as so many in this nation do! How was our Saviour affected with it in reference to *Jerusalem*, Luke xix. 41, 42. *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.* Oh! if we had but any measure of that pity and compassion which dwelt in his holy soul, how could we pass through towns and cities, and see and hear, and not mourn!

Use 2. Take that advice of the Prophet, *Jer. xiii. 16. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.*

(2.) The second thing that God doth, in giving up an unhealed land unto barrenness, is his judicial hardning of them, or leaving them to hardness and impenitency, that so they may fill up the measure of their sins, *Heb. vi. 8. That which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing.* When the care of God is once taken from them, they are nigh unto cursing; the next thing that God will do to them, is to curse them, as our Saviour did the barren fig-tree.

This woful judgment is at large set forth, *Isa. vi. 9, 10. And he said, Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed.* *Isaiah* was a Gospel preacher; yet this, saith God, shall be the effect of thy preaching towards them that have withstood their season, and have not been healed by the word. And *John* tells us, that this very thing was accomplished, when the Gospel was preached by our Saviour himself, *chap. xii. 40, 41.* And surely their condition is most woful, whom the preaching of the Gospel hardeneth, whom the only remedy destroys.

Now there are four things in this spiritual judgment, that God sends upon unhealed souls, that have outlived their season of healing, more or less.

[1.] Blindness of mind and understanding. Their natural blindness and ignorance shall be encreased and confirmed; and that by two ways:

1.) God

1.) God will send them *a spirit of slumber*, Rom. xi. 8. that is, a great inadvertency and negligence as to the things of the Gospel, that are spoken of, or preached unto them. As men that slumber take little notice of what is spoken to them, or about them; they hear a noise, and sometimes discern a little what is spoken, but not to any use or purpose: so is it with these persons, on whom God doth judicially send this spirit of slumber; they hear the sound of the word, and sometimes it may be take notice of some one thing or other that is spoken; but to receive and understand the design of it, to ponder it and improve it, that they cannot do; they are under a spiritual slumber. We may see multitudes in this condition every day, the word hath no life nor vigour towards them; they perceive not the mind of God in it; they understand it not; God hath given them *a spirit of slumber*, and they die under it.

2.) God sends them a spirit of giddiness, causing them to err in their ways, *Isa. xix. 14.* We have a notable instance of this judgment of God, *2 Thes. ii. 10, 11, 12.* The waters of the sanctuary came unto them, and they were not healed; the Gospel was preached unto them, but they withstood their season; they received not the love of the truth; they did not believe and obey, that they might be saved; because they had pleasure in unrighteousness. How then doth God deal with them? *ver. 11.* He will send them a spirit of giddiness or delusion, that *they shall believe a lie*, false doctrine, false worship, superstition, and idolatry. This they shall believe, and have pleasure in; which will have the fearful end mention'd, *ver. 12.* And this judgment, as it is already come upon many, so it lies at the door, I fear, of the most. We see men every day, that have for some years, it may be, enjoyed the preaching of the Gospel, but not being healed, quickened, and sanctified by it, are now with all greediness given up to follow after fables on the one hand, or superstition on the other; there is a spirit of giddiness from the Lord upon them. And by these means is the darkness of the minds of men increased, when God is giving of them up to barrenness.

[2.] Obstinacy in the will, or hardness of heart, properly so called, is in this judgment of God also. God will give up unhealed persons to hardness of heart. So is it in that place of *Isaiah vi. 10.* and it is the same with that which the Apostle calls, *A reprobate mind*, Rom. i. 28. that is, a mind and heart that is good for nothing with regard to spiritual things, profligate, and altogether insensible of them. And when this befalls any, they will openly despise the word, and cast it off, using one foolish pretence or other for their so doing, as *Jer. xlv. 16.* with *chap. xliii. 2.* Such persons, whenever the word is preached unto them, and it lies cross to their carnal imaginations, or sensual affections, lusts, or sports, rise up in their hearts with contempt, and rage against it. Sometimes they will colour their wickedness in their hearts by some pretence or other: this is the way, the humour, the singularity of the preacher. Or sometimes their rage will carry them out directly against the word, without any colour or pretence, but because it displeaseth them. Or if they fall not thus into pride and rage, which usually is occasioned by their temptations, they grow utterly senseless, and stupid, and unconcerned in the things of God. Let the word thunder from heaven against their sins, they regard it not. Let the still, small voice of the Gospel persuade them unto reconciliation, they attend not unto it. Let the judgments of God be abroad in the world, if they escape themselves, they are not concerned about them. Do they reach their own persons; they have wrath, and anger, and vexation; but they cannot repent, or turn to the Lord. This is apparently the condition of most in the world.

[3.] Sensuality of affections is in this judgment also, *Rom. i. 26.* *He gave them up to vile affections*; that is, to place their affections on vile, sensual things. Unhealed persons shall do so. Our streets, ale-houses, and many other places are full of such whose affections are fixed with madness on vile things; and they please themselves in them, little thinking that this is part of the judgment whereunto they are given up of God, for their unprofitableness under the word; for their not being healed by the waters of the sanctuary.

[4.] Searedness of conscience, *1 Tim. iv. 2.* *Having their conscience seared with an hot iron.* *Ephes. iv. 19.* *Being past feeling.* Whatever sin they commit, or condition they fall into, conscience shall no more discharge its duty in them, and towards them.

And

And this is the second thing that God will do towards such unhealed persons.

(3.) The third thing considerable is the event of this dealing of God with them; or what is meant by this land's becoming *salt*.

Two things, as I have shewed before, are hereby intended. [1.] Barrenness in this world. [2.] Eternal ruin in the world to come.

[1.] Barrenness: They shall never bear any fruit to God. This was the curse that our Saviour gave to the fig-tree: *Never fruit grow on thee*. Man was made to bear fruit unto God; this is all he came into the world for. Now when God shall say to any, Go your ways, you shall never do any thing more for me, whilst you live in this world; you shall never bear any fruit to me: what sorer judgment can any man possibly fall under? I might shew you the misery of this condition in many particulars. *Israel is an empty vine*. Hos. x. 1.

[2.] Eternal ruin, and that irreparable. Prov. xxix. 1. *He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy*. John xv. 6. *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned*. 2 Thes. ii. 12. *That they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*. Heb. vi. 8. *But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned*. This is the certain event of that land, that is left unto salt, because not healed; and of those persons, who having passed over their season of quickning and sanctifying by the word, are given up to barrenness and ruin. It will do neither me nor you good to flatter you, and to put you into any better hope, than your condition will admit of. See Ezek. xxxiii. 8. *When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand*. This will be the end of the one and the other, when that course is taken. Did I not see the tokens of this judgment of God abroad in the world, I would not thus insist upon it, as I do.

Use 1. Of exhortation. Make use of your season, that you fall not under this sore and inexpressible judgment. God gives men a season, a space to repent in, Rev. ii. 21. This space and season, as I have shewed you before, is not oftentimes all the while, that the Gospel is preached unto you. The word may be preached, and yet its efficacy wholly restrained from you, and that because your time and season is gone. And so it comes to pass daily; and you know not how soon it may be your lot and portion, and you perceive it not. Therefore is the Apostle so earnest in exhorting men to make use of their day, before their season be gone, Heb. iii. 12, 13. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened thro' the deceitfulness of sin*. As if he should say; Take heed to yourselves, stir up yourselves, for if your day be once passed over, you are then gone for ever; it will then be too late for you to look out after mercy. And so again, 2 Cor. vi. 2. *Now is the day; now is the time*. If you stand in need of any commodity, that can be had but at one fair, that day, that season you will not neglect. You stand in need, I am sure, of grace, mercy, pardon, Christ, life, salvation; there is only this day, this season for you to obtain it in: O, that you would be persuaded to look out after it, before it be hidden from you! See Heb. x. 31. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*. So the same Apostle again, Heb. xii. 15. *Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God*. Use all diligence in this matter.

To excite you a little to this, consider

(1.) That if you are not healed during your season, you can never be healed. If the Gospel cure you not, you must die in your sins. Men are greatly mistaken, when they flatter themselves, that it can never be too late for them in this world, there is time enough whilst they are alive. Alas! you have but your season; and that may be over with you many days, before you leave the world, yea many years. We have every where ground evidently *left to salt*, though yet not burned up. Use your day.

(2.) You know not how your day is going away, nor when it will be over. The traveller on the road, that hath a journey to go, knows how to order his affairs. It is, saith he, so many hours to night, and I have time enough before me; so doth the

the labouring man also: but, alas! it is not so with you; you know not how soon your day may be over. I speak not of your lives which the Lord knows are uncertain; but the day of the Gospel may be over, whilst the day of your lives continue. Nor can you be certain of the day of the preaching of the word; but your day, and your season in it, may come to an end, this day, or this night, for ought that you or I know. So that your concernment is unspeakably great in the proposal that is made unto you. Remember the virgins that were shut out, and their cry at midnight.

You will say then, What shall we do to know when it is our season, that we may apply our hearts unto this exhortation?

I answer: The Lord alone, who is the searcher of all hearts, knows how it is with you; and whether you have not any of you in particular outstood your opportunity. I can only tell you what is a Gospel season, which you are to take care, that you may have a share and interest in.

[1.] It is required that the Gospel be preached in the power and purity of it. This in general makes *the acceptable day, the time of salvation*. And if there be nothing else concurring, this is enough to let a people, or person know, that the day of the Lord is come upon them, that the waters of the sanctuary are come unto them. Now consider with yourselves, whether the Gospel be preached unto you or not. Or whether you may not, or might not have it so preached unto you, or enjoy the dispensation of it, did you but discharge your duty. If it be so, this is one evidence that it is yet your day.

[2.] It is a special season, when providential calls do join in with, and farther Gospel calls; when God causes the Gospel to be dispensed unto a people, and at the same time puts forth some acts of his providence, that are suited to awaken men to the consideration of their state and condition, then is the season of that people. I shall not go over the several providential calls that have been upon us, to enquire after the ways of God. Are all the alterations that have been amongst us, discovering the great uncertainty of all things that are here below, no call? Was there no call in the great unseasonableness of the year? No call in the danger of the loss of the Gospel, which seems to stand ready for its flight from you? the great uncertainty how long you may enjoy these waters of the sanctuary? It is certain, that if you have not neglected already your season, your day of grace, you are now under the time that you are to be tried in.

[3.] Then is the season, when God moves at some seasons more effectually upon your hearts and spirits in the dispensation of the word, than at other times. This you alone can give an account of; you only know how it is with you; you can tell, whether you have not been moved by the word more than formerly, or convinced by it; whether you have not had purposes of amendment and reformation wrought in you by it; whether you have not been caused to love it more than you have done formerly; whether it hath not begotten at times resolutions in you to try for life and immortality. If it have not, it is much to be feared lest the Lord is leaving of you to salt, to an estate of perishing and everlasting ruin. But if you have had such effects wrought in you, know of a certain, that the kingdom of God hath come unto you; and if you withstand your opportunity, you are gone and undone for ever, unless you make thorough work before this dispensation be overpast.

[4.] When you see others about you earnest after the word; this is God's call and ordinance unto you to look to your own condition.

If now by any of these means you come to know that the day of the Lord, and the season of your healing is upon you; Oh, that you would be prevailed with to be wise for your own souls, and to close with the word of the Gospel, before the things of your peace be hidden from your eyes!

I thought in the next place, to have given you the signs of a departing Gospel day, and evidences of mens having outlived their season, and being given up to salt and barrenness; but for some reasons forbear.

Use 2. To discover the miserable condition of poor creatures, that having not in their season been healed by the waters of the sanctuary, are given up of the Lord to salt and barrenness. No heart can conceive, nor tongue express the misery of such poor creatures. Let me only mention some particulars.

(1.) They know not that they are so miserable. They perceive not, they understand not the sore judgment that they are under. Do but their heads ach, or are

they sick of an ague, they feel it presently, and seek out for remedies; but in this case the curse of God is upon them, and they do not at all perceive it, and so seek not out for relief. Hof. vii. 9. *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.* They are nigh to ruin, to destruction, and perceive it not, they take no notice of the misery that is at hand ready to devour them; or if at any time they begin so to do, they shift off the thoughts of it, which is a great part of their misery.

(2.) They are pleased with the condition in which they are; *they cry peace and safety, when sudden destruction is at hand*, 1 Thes. v. 3. They please themselves in their condition, when the vengeance of the Lord is ready to seize upon them. Is the Gospel removed from them, and the streams of the sanctuary turned away? They are so far from being troubled at it, that they rejoice in it, as hath been declared: they think they may now follow their lusts freely, and do whatever seems good unto themselves: they despise others and bless themselves, as if all were well with them. Or is the word yet continued, but they left to senselessness, and fast under it? They are pleased with their estate, wonder at those who are troubled under the word, and exceedingly despise them. All is well with themselves; and some of them are ready to deride all others that are under the work of the Lord. On this account it is, that they do not, will not, look out for relief, or healing.

(3.) No man can help, or relieve them. Men may pity them, but they cannot help them. All the world cannot pull a poor creature out from under the curse of the great God.

(4.) Their eternal ruin is certain, as before proved.

(5.) This ruin is very sore on Gospel despisers.

S E R M O N XV.

* God's withdrawing his Presence, the Correction
of his Church.

ISA. lxiii. 17.

O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways? and hardened our hearts from thy fear? Return for thy servants sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.



THESE are words that carry a great deal of dread in them: tremendous words, methinks, as any in the book of God. And according as our concernment shall be found in them, they require very sad thoughts of heart. It is come now to the last, this is the last cast; if we miss in pursuing this great enquiry, we are undone for ever: *O Lord, why hast thou caused us to err from thy ways? Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?* God is in this matter whereof we have been complaining.

* This Sermon was preached on a solemn day of fasting and prayer, 21. March 1675. For which occasion the Doctor had prepared another discourse, but by a special reason which then occurred, had his thoughts directed to this subject.

It is the true Church of God that speaks these words. This is plain in the acting of faith as to the great interest and privilege of adoption, in the *verse* foregoing, where they say, *Doubtless thou art our Father*: however things are with us, *doubtless thou art our Father*. When all other evidences fail, faith will secretly maintain the soul with a persuasion of its relation unto God; as you see by the Church in this place. They were *all as an unclean thing*, and their holiness *all faded away as a leaf*, Isa. lxiv. 6. And yet faith maintains a sense of a relation to God; and therefore they cry, *Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not, O Lord, thou art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting*. And I am persuaded some of you have found it so, that faith hath maintained an interest in a relation to God, when all particular evidences have failed. So it is in our head, Jesus Christ, when he cried, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* When all particular evidences fail, he can still say, *My God, my God*. So is it here with this miserable and distressed Church and people of God; all is lost and gone, and yet faith cries, *Doubtless thou art our Father*. And if in the matters of this day, God would help us to maintain, and not let go our interest in him as our Father by faith, we should have a bottom and foundation to stand upon. If it be so with us as hath been confessed to God, and I fear it is worse, we shall be at a loss for our particular evidences, at one time or other; but yet it will be a great advantage when faith can maintain its station, and we be enabled to say, *Though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel will not own us, such vile creatures; and tho' our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and our holiness fadeth away as a leaf, and our adversaries have trodden upon us, yet doubtless thou art our Father*. The Lord help us to say thus when we depart, and we shall yet have a foundation of hope.

I would observe here the condition of the Church at that time. It was a state of affliction and oppression; of oppression on the one hand, and of deep conviction of sin on the other. It is well when they go together.

First, It was a time of distress and oppression; as is declared, *ver. 18. Our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary*. The adversary had grievously oppressed them: but that which the Church was most concerned in, was, that they had trodden down the sanctuary, disturbed the holy assemblies, and broken up the worship of God. And it is well, brethren, if under all oppression and distresses that may befall us, we do really find our principal concern is for the treading down God's sanctuary. Whatever else lay upon them, this was that they complained of: *Our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary*.

Secondly, It was also a time of deep conviction of sin with them. As the prayer is continued unto the end of the next chapter, you may see what a deep conviction of sin was fallen upon them, in *ver. 6, 7. Behold we are all as an unclean thing, all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold on thee: thou hast hid thy face from us, and melted us down because of our iniquities*.

Well then, suppose it be a state of great oppression, and a state of great conviction of sin: what is the course that we should take? We may turn ourselves this way and that way; but the Church, you see, is come to this, to issue all in an enquiry after, and a sense of God's displeasure, manifesting itself by spiritual judgments. And this, in truth, brethren, if I understand any thing of the state and condition of my own soul, and yours, and of the generality of the Churches of God in the world, is that which we are in particular called to, and where we are to issue all this business: namely, to enquire into God's displeasure, and the reason of it, manifesting itself in spiritual judgments. *O Lord, why hast thou caused us to err from thy ways? And why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?*

It is but a little I shall speak to you at this time: God I hope will give us other seasons to pursue the same design: my present distemper, and other occasions, will not suffer me now to enlarge; however, I will lay a foundation (if God help me) by opening the words unto you.

I. What is it to err from the ways of God?

II. What is it to have our hearts hardened from the fear of God?

III. What

III. What ways are there, whereby God may cause us to err from his ways, and harden our hearts from his fear?

IV. What may be the reasons why the Lord should deal thus severely with a poor people, after they have walked with him, it may be, many years, that at length they should be brought to this complaint: *Lord, why hast thou caused us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?* And then

V. What is to be done for relief in this condition? What course is to be taken?

These are the things that should be first spoken to from the text; and then we should come to the last clause: *Return for thy servant's sake, &c.* I shall proceed as far as I am able.

I. What is it to err from the ways of God?

The ways of God are either God's ways towards us, or our ways towards him, that are of his appointment. God's ways towards us are the ways of his providence. Our ways towards God are the ways of obedience and holiness. We may err in both.

I think in that place of the *Hebrews*, *They have always erred in heart, and have not known my ways*, God principally intends his ways towards them; they did not know the ways of his providential workings, how mightily he had wrought for them. But the ways that God hath appointed for us to walk in towards him, are these here intended. Now we may err from thence two ways: 1. in the inward principle: 2. in the outward order.

1. We may err in the inward principle. When the principle of spiritual life in our hearts decays, when we *fade as a leaf*, and wither, then is this our case.

2. We err as to outward order, when we fail in the performance of duty, in our walking, and in the course of our obedience and holiness that God hath called us unto. These for the most part go together. But from the text, and the whole context, I judge the first here to be principally intended; a failing in the principle, in our hearts, and in a lively power of walking in the ways of God, and of living unto him. So that to err from the ways of God, is to have our hearts weakened, spiritually disenabled, often turned aside from the vigorous, effectual, powerful walking with God, which we are called unto.

II. What is it to have our hearts hardened from the fear of God?

There is a twofold hardning from God's fear: 1. there is a total hardning: and, 2. a partial hardning.

1. There is a total hardning, like that mentioned, *Isa. 6. 10. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* This was a total hardning that came upon the *Jews* when they rejected Christ. That is not the hardning here intended: those that are given up to a total hardness will not thus humble themselves before God, nor plead with God. Blessed be God that he hath not given us up to a total hardning, that we should utterly and wickedly depart from his ways.

2. There is a partial hardning, mentioned by the Apostle, *Heb. iii. 13. Take heed, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*: lest there come an hardness upon you that may be to your disadvantage. And it is this partial hardning that is here intended: and wherein it consists, I shall speak a little afterwards. It is this partial hardning that is intended in the text: *Thou hast hardened our hearts from thy fear.*

III. How is God said to cause us to err from his ways, and to harden our hearts from his fear?

God is said to do it these several ways:

1. God is said to do that, (and it is not an uncommon form of speech in Scripture) whose contrary he doth not do, when it might be expected, as it were, from him. If there be a prophet that doth prophecy so and so, *I the Lord have deceived that prophet*, *Ezek. xiv. 9.* that is, I have not kept him from being deceived, but suffered him to follow the imaginations of his own heart, whereby he should be deceived. God may be said to cause us to err from his ways, and to harden our hearts from his fear merely negatively, in that he hath not kept us up to his ways, nor kept our hearts humble and soft in them.

2. Again, God hardens men judicially, in a way of punishment. This is a total hardning, of which we spoke before. And there are these acts of it, which I think are as evident in the times wherein we live, as the judgments of God have been in the plague, or burning of the city, inundations, or any thing else. Spiritual judgments of God in hardning the hearts of men judicially and penally to their destruction, are as visible to every considering person, as any of God's outward judgments whatsoever. This will appear if we consider the following things wherein it consists.

(1.) The first thing God doth, when he hardens mens hearts penally, is to give them up to their own lusts. It is directly expressed, *Rom. i. 24. Wherefore God gave them up to their hearts lusts.* When God leaves men, and gives them up to pursue their own lusts with delight and greediness, then he is hardning them. And this is a visible judgment of God at this day: he takes off shame, fear, all restraint and disadvantages, and gives men up to their hearts lusts.

(2.) The second thing is, that God in penal hardning, gives men up to Satan to blind them, darken them, harden them: for he is *the God of this world that blinds the eyes of men.* And the great work of blinding and hardning men is committed unto him: and the principal way whereby he works at this day, is by being a lying spirit in the mouth of the false prophets, crying, Peace, peace, when God hath not spoken a word of peace. As it was in the business of *Ahab*, when Satan went and caught at a commission to seduce *Ahab* to go up to *Ramoth Gilead*; he did it by being a lying spirit in the mouths of the false prophets. God is visibly at work in the world with this judgment, giving men up unto Satan acting in the mouths of the false prophets, who cry, Peace, peace, to all sorts of sinners, when God speaks not one word of peace.

(3.) The third way whereby God doth judicially give up men to hardness of heart, is, by supplying them in his providence with opportunities to draw out their lusts. They shall have opportunity for them. It is commonly given for one of the darkest dispensations of divine providence towards men, when it orders things so that they shall have opportunities to accomplish their lusts, and go on in their ways administered unto them.

(4.) Lastly, In pursuit of all these, God gives them over to a *reprobate mind*, *Rom. i.* that is, a mind that can neither judge nor approve of any thing that is good. Propose to men the most convincing things wherein their own interest and concern lies, shew them that eternal ruin lies at the door, it is all one, they having a mind that can judge of nothing that is good. And the world is full of evidences of this work of God.

3. God may be said to cause men to err from his ways, and to harden their hearts from his fear, by withholding, upon their provocation, some such supply of his spirit, and actings of his grace, as they have formerly enjoyed to keep up their hearts to the ways, and in the fear of God. And that is the hardning here intended. The Lord had withheld upon just provocations, those supplies of his grace and spirit which formerly were enjoyed, and which had given them a vigorous spirit in the ways of God, and a tender heart in the fear of God, which now they have lost, or else they could never have been sensible of it.

From what has been said we may make the following observations.

Obs. 1. Even true believers themselves may for a season so err from the ways of God, as to have their hearts partially hardened from his fear, and may fall under this state and condition, to err from the ways of God, by a decay of the principle of grace; and so to have their hearts hardened from his fear, that they know not where they are, what they are doing, how it is with them, which way to look for relief to supply themselves, or how to recover strength, or heal themselves; but are forced to cry, *O Lord, why hast thou caused us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?*

Obs. 2. God himself hath a righteous hand in this frame of spirit, that sometimes befalls believers.

Obs. 3. This frame is the most deplorable condition that can befall the Church of God at any time; which is manifest upon these two accounts; that it both takes away all solid evidences of God's special love; and inevitably exposes us to outward distresses and ruin, if it be not remedied. And therefore it is a most deplorable condition to be brought into such a state.

Let us now a little enquire, as we before propos'd, what it is to have our hearts hardned thus partially from the fear of God.

The fear of God may be considered in several respects: as it regards sin, and so is a fear of caution and humility; or as it regards judgments, and so is a fear of reverence, wisdom, and diligence to improve them; or lastly, as it regards duty, and so becomes a fear of obedience and watchfulness. Now the want of a due sense of sin, of judgments, or of a due attendance unto duties, is this partial hardning.

(1.) A partial hardning consists in the want of a due sense of sin. It is the fear of God alone that can give us a due sense of sin. Judgments will give dread, and convictions disquiet; but it is the fear of God alone that gives a due sense of sin. Therefore when we want this, our hearts are in some measure hardned from the fear of God, which discovers itself in the following particulars. [1.] A want of a due sense of secret sins. [2.] A want of a due sense of sin in an uncircumspect walking. [3.] A want of a due sense of surprisal into known sins. [4.] A want of a due sense of the sins of others. Where these things are, there is hardning from the fear of God.

[1.] This hardning consists in a want of a due sense of secret sins. And there is much in this. I shall but just name things unto you. The psalmist lays great weight on it, *Psal. xix. 12. Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; and cleanse thou me from secret faults.* In these two lye the life of a believer. And there is no more safety if we are not cleansed from secret sins, than if we are not kept back from presumptuous sins. Every one will conclude, if they are not kept back from presumptuous sins, they are undone forever; but the danger is the same, if they are not cleansed, and have not a due sense of secret sins.

If it be asked, what are these secret sins? 1.) They are the vain imaginations of the mind. 2.) The corrupt actings of the affections of the heart. And 3.) A frame of soul suited unto them. These are the things I intend by secret sins.

1.) The vain imaginations of the mind. The Holy Ghost tells us that by nature *all the imaginations of the heart of man are evil, and that continually.* And God knows what remainders there are of this vanity of mind, and these vain imaginations in all our hearts. I place it at the head of what I intend, whereof, if we have not a due sense, we are under hardning from the fear of God. These vain imaginations of our mind, are such as no eye sees, none knows, not the angels in heaven, nor the devils, but are the special object of the eye, and sight, and knowledge of God.

2.) The corrupt actings and desires of our affections, wherein lust conceiveth. Lust tempts and seduces in vain imaginations, but conceiveth in the corrupt desires and actings of our affections.

3.) And both these, if indulged in any measure, will be continually pressing upon our nature; both the vain imaginations of the mind, and the corrupt actings of the affections towards perishing, worldly, sensual things, either to lawful objects in an undue manner, or to unlawful objects, will both be pressing on the mind; and if, by solicitation, they take place upon it, then the mind is cast into a dead, lifeless, carnal, loose frame; which frame also I reckon among these secret sins.

Now, brethren, more or less these things are true in us, according to the several degrees of grace we have received, through the woful negligence we have been betray'd into. Have we a due sense of these things? Or can we walk with boldness and confidence, peace and undisturbedness in our minds day and night, though these things be upon us? if so, we are in some measure hardned from the fear of God. The fear of God hath not its proper work upon us, which would keep us deeply sensible of these things, deeply afflict us for them, keep us in an abhorrence of them, and make us watchful against them night and day; and not suffer vain thoughts to come and go without spiritual conflicts, nor inordinate affections to the word, without wounds given to it by the spirit of God. If it is not so with us, our hearts are hardned from the fear of God.

[2.] This partial hardning also contains in it a want of a due sense of an irregular course of walking. There is a course of walking that will please the world, satisfy the Church, and which professors shall greatly approve of; and yet if a man come to examine his own heart by the rule, he shall find his course of walking judged: for though the world hath nothing to object against us, and though professors do well approve of us; yet when we come to the rule, that will discover our iniquity. We are bound to walk

walk by rule: *God will have mercy on them that walk according to this rule.* We are bound to walk circumspectly in all things: *Walk circumspectly redeeming the time; worthy of God; worthy of the Lord;* which extend to all duties of our walk in the whole course of our lives. If we satisfy ourselves that our walk is such as answers known duties that are required of us, that none in the world can lay blame upon us, and professors will approve of; but do not bring it to the rule, and judge it there, we err from the ways of God: and if we bring it to the rule, and judge it there, and have not a due sense, so as to be greatly humbled for it, our hearts are so far hardned from the fear of God; for if we were in the fear of God all the day long, as we ought to be, it would be so with us. Many mens boldness and confidence in the world, and many mens peace will be resolved at length into a neglect of this duty, that they have not proved their walk by this rule, and that light God hath set up in their own souls. We may, I say, brethren, have something of this partial hardness upon our hearts in these instances, want of a deep sense as to secret sins, want of self-judging as to our irregular walking, wherein it comes short of the rule, the holy rule we are to attend unto. And who can say of his walk, that it is worthy of God and the Lord, which yet we are called unto? Alas! it is not worth the owning ourselves, and the profession we make; how much less is it worthy of God?

[3.] This hardning likewise carries in it a want of a due sense of sin upon surprisal into known sins. *There is no man that liveth and sinneth not;* but this respects known sins: I do not mean sins that are known unto others, but sins we know in particular, wherein we have offended against God. And known sins are great sins, sins against light, and for the most part against engagements and promises of watchfulness; and there is something, if we examine thoroughly, of wilfulness in them; and great sins should have great sorrow and great humiliation. Truly, brethren, I am afraid, and I would be jealous over myself and you, that we are apt to put off even known sins upon slighter terms than the rule of the covenant doth admit of. We are apt to resolve them in general into the covenant of grace and mercy, or to pass them over with one or two confessions, or the like, and do not bring every known sin unto its proper issue in the blood of Christ, as we ought. If we don't do this, we are hardned thus partially from the fear of God. The true fear of God would keep us up to this, that no one known sin should ever pass us, without a particular issuing of it in the blood of Christ, and obtaining peace in it.

[4.] Want of a due sense of the sin of others is a great sign that we are partially hardned from God's fear; as it is a sign men are totally hardned, when they do not only commit sin themselves, but have pleasure in them that do it. We have before us the sins of professors, the sins of the world, the provoking sins of the nation, in the generation wherein we live, and the sins of all sorts of men; and I think there is not in any one duty more spiritual wisdom required of believers, than how to deport themselves, with a suitable frame of heart, in reference to the sins of other men. Some are ready to be contented that they should sin, and sometimes ready to make sport at their sins, and for the most part it is indifferent unto us at what rate men sin in the world, so it go well with us or the Church of Christ. We understand but little of that: *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law,* Psal. cxix. 136. I confess, I think there is little of this in the world that we can truly say, as he did, by the spirit of God, that our eyes run down with water, because other men, all sorts of men, keep not God's law. There is a *sighing and mourning for all the abominations that are done among a people.* What people? Truly people that were idolaters, and false worshipers, and very wicked, as that people was at that time: yet God required there should be *sighing and mourning for all the abominations;* and took special notice of the working of grace that one way above all other things. And the Lord help us, I am afraid we have very small concern for the sins of other men. And it is resolved into these two principles: want of zeal for God's glory; and want of compassion to the souls of men, which would make us deeply concerned for the sins of other men. Sin in the world is grown a common thing to us; we do not rend our garments, when we hear of all the blasphemies and atheism in the world, all the blood, uncleanness, profaneness, oaths. Every sin is grown common to us; no body is affected; *None taketh hold upon God,* saith the prophet. What will be the end of these things? Yet we speak of them as commonly as of our daily food. This is not to be under the power of the fear of

of the Lord. There is a partial hardness upon us from the fear of the Lord in that general, and almost universal unconcernedness that is upon us about the sins of other men.

I thought to have spoken to the remaining heads of this partial hardness of our hearts from God's fear; the want of a due sense of God's judgments; and the want of a due attendance unto, and walk with God in a way of duty: but I shall wave them, and proceed to the *fourth* thing proposed to be enquired into.

IV. Why doth the holy God deal thus with a professing people? What reason can we find in ourselves, why it should be so, in making this complaint, that we neither charge God foolishly, as the author and cause of sin; nor go about to extenuate our own sins, but aggravate and burthen our consciences with a sense of them? Why doth the holy God thus deal with us?

The reasons are of two sorts: 1. What provokes God unto it, which are the procuring reasons: 2. What God aims at in it, which are the final reasons, why it is thus with us.

1. What provokes God to it? I answer, three things.

(1.) Unthankfulness for mercy received. Thus in the *chapter*, wherein is my text, it is said, *ver. 7, 8, 9. 10. Surely they are my people, children that will not lie, so I was their Saviour. In all their afflictions, he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and vexed his holy spirit, therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.* God doth in this matter turn to be our enemy; he fights against us. Why doth he so? Because he hath redeemed us in his love, because he hath borne us in his arms all the days of our lives, because he hath manifested that in all our afflictions he was afflicted, because he had been a Saviour, and heard us; and under all these mercies received, we have rebelled and vexed his holy spirit, have been unthankful and ungrateful: therefore he is become our enemy, and fights against us. I beg of you, brethren, that we may call over those innumerable mercies we have received from the Lord, spiritual mercies, temporal mercies, and consider whether these evils be not befallen us; whether our unthankfulness for mercy hath not caused God to become our enemy, and to fight against us.

(2.) A second reason is, inordinate cleaving to the things of the world at a most undue season. It may be it would not provoke God so much thus to fight against us, and harden our hearts from his fear, if the season of it was not undue. Don't we see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, that God is unsettling all things here below, and that all these things shall be dissolved? When God gives so many intimations, that *all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* Cleaving inordinately to the things of the world, at such a season, is that which provoketh God to deal thus: *For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* God smote them for the iniquity of their covetousness in such a woful undue season. Let us, brethren, be at work; I may be under great mistakes and misapprehensions, but I must tell you what is upon my heart; I can't but think, that unless we are particularly at work every one of us, we shall be overtaken with these dismal and dreadful effects, and God will appear against us, and fight against us.

(3.) The third reason is, our unprofitableness, and unsuitableness to the means of grace we have enjoyed. O, the barren land of *England*, upon which the rain hath often fallen, and hath brought forth nothing but briars and thorns! We have had our proportion in it, brethren, you of this congregation can even make your boast of what you have enjoyed of this and that man's ministry for many years; but, O, the leanness and barrenness that is among us now all is done, our unsuitableness to the means we have enjoyed! We may repent one day that we ever had any among us who excelled others in gifts and graces, if we profit no more. We have not profited suitably to the means we have enjoyed, but every vain and foolish imagination hath turned us aside from keeping as we ought to the good and holy ways of God. We do not flourish in fruitfulness, in favouriness, and profitableness answerable to what the dispensations of God have been towards us; for the dew of God hath been upon us from time to time.

Now

Now besides these things named, which are publick causes, why God hath brought us under this dispensation, let us all search our hearts, and say; *Lord, why hast thou caused me thus far to err from thy ways, and hardned my heart from thy fear?* Why have I not former faith, love, affections, zeal? Why do not I mourn more? Where are my tears and humiliation? Those heart-breaking sighs and groans after God which my heart was once filled withal? O Lord, *why is my heart thus hardned from thy fear?* Let us enquire into the particular reasons, that at last we may come to cry; *Return, O Lord, for thy servant's sake, the tribes of thy inheritance.*

2. What does God aim at in such a dispensation? We have mentioned the procuring reasons and causes: now what are the final ends, why God will thus deal with us?

There are two ends the holy God seems to have in these things.

(1.) The first is to awaken us unto the consideration of what an all-seeing God he is, with whom we have to do. When we please the world, and one another, and ourselves in our walkings and conversations, God will have us know, he is displeased. Though we please ourselves, and cry, Peace, and please the world, and one another; yet God will so withdraw his spirit and grace, that we shall be forced to say; Why is God thus displeased with us? He will have us glorify him, as one that is an all-seeing God; as one that knows our inward frames, and tries us upon them.

(2.) God doth it to awaken us. If there be any thing of true grace in our hearts, a sense of spiritual judgments will awaken us, when all outward judgments in the world will not do it: no, if thunder and lightning be round about us, if ruin and the sword be before us, and the earth underneath be ready to swallow us up, they will not work so kindly upon a believer's heart, as a sense of spiritual judgments. I hope God hath a design of love to awaken us all by this dispensation, to return unto him.

But to proceed to the last enquiry.

V. What way shall we take now for retrieving our souls out of this state and condition?

One way is prescribed here. It is by prayer: *Return, O Lord.* It is to beg of God to return.

What arguments have we to plead with God to return? This being the case, the arguments here given are peculiar to the case; and we may plead them. They are two: 1. Sovereign mercy and compassion: And, 2. Faithfulness in covenant. They are both here pleaded.

1. Sovereign mercy, *ver. 15. Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness, and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercy towards me? are they restrained?* Our great plea in this case is upon sovereign mercy and compassion. Plead the pity of God; beg mercy of God; come to God, as those that stand in need of mercy, and of the sounding of his bowels.

2. The second argument is, God's faithfulness in the covenant, *ver. 16. Doubtless thou art our Father: we are thine.*

These are the two arguments we are night and day to plead with God, for our recovery from this state and condition of erring from the ways of God, and of having our hearts hardned from his fear: sovereign mercy, and covenant faithfulness. And this is all I shall speak to at this time.

* S E R M O N XVI.

Perilous Times.

2 TIM. iii. 1.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.



YOU know my way and manner upon these occasions, is to speak as plainly and familiarly as I can, unto what is of our present concernment; and so I design to do at this time, if it shall please God to help under infirmities.

The words contain a warning of imminent dangers. And there are four things in them. *First*, the manner of the warning: *This know also*. *Secondly*, the evil itself that they are warned of: *Perilous times*. *Thirdly*, the way of their introduction: *They shall come*. *Fourthly*, the time and season of it: *They shall come in the last days*.

First, The manner of the warning: *This know also*. Thou *Timothy*, unto the other instructions which I have given thee, how to behave thyself in the house of God, whereby thou mayst be set forth as a pattern unto all Gospel ministers in future ages, I must also add this: *This know also*. It belongs to thy office and duty to know and consider the impending judgments that are coming upon Churches.

And so, as a justification of my present design, if God enable me unto it, I shall here premise: That it is the duty of the ministers of the Gospel to foresee and take notice of the dangers, which the Churches are falling into. And the Lord help us, and all other ministers, to be awakned unto this part of our duty. You know how God sets it forth *Ezek. xxxiii.* in the parable of the watchman, to warn men of approaching dangers. And truly God hath given us this law: if we warn the Churches of their approaching dangers, we discharge our duty; if we do not, their blood will be required at our hands. The spirit of God foresaw negligence apt to grow upon us in this matter; and therefore the Scripture only proposeth duty on the one hand; and on the other requires the peoples blood at the hands of the watchmen, if they perform not their duty. So speaks the prophet *Isaiah*, chap. xxi. 8. *He cried a lion: my Lord, I stand continually upon the watch tower*. A lion is an emblem of approaching judgment. *The lion hath roared, who can but tremble?* saith the prophet *Amos*. It is the duty of ministers of the Gospel to give warning of impending dangers.

Again, the Apostle in speaking unto *Timothy*, speaks unto us also, to us all: *This know ye also*. It is the great concern of all professors and believers of all Churches, to have their hearts very much fixed upon present and approaching dangers. We have enquired so long about signs, tokens, and evidences of deliverance, and I know not what, that we have almost lost the benefit of all our trials, afflictions, and persecutions. The duty of all believers, is to be intent upon present and imminent dangers. *O Lord*, say the Disciples, *Matth. xxiv.* *what shall be the sign of thy coming?* They were fixed upon his coming. Our Saviour answers, I will tell you. 1. There shall be an abounding of errors and false teachers: many shall say, *Lo here is Christ*,

* This Sermon was preached Nov. 3. 1676, being a day set apart for solemn fasting and prayer.

and lo there is Christ. 2. There shall be an apostasy from holiness: *Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold.* 3. There shall be great distress of nations: *Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.* 4. There shall be great persecutions: *And they shall persecute you, and bring you before rulers, and you shall be hated of all men for my name sake.* 5. There shall be great tokens of God's wrath from heaven: *Signs in the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars.* The Lord Christ would acquaint believers how they should look for his coming. He tells them of all the dangers: Be intent upon these things; I know you are apt to overlook them, but these are the things that you are to be intent upon.

Not to be sensible of a present perilous season, is that security which the Scripture so condemns; and I will leave it with you in short under these three things.

1. It is that frame of heart which of all others God doth most detest and abhor. Nothing is more hateful to God than a secure frame in perilous days. 2. I will not fear to say this, and go with it, as to my sense, to the day of judgment: A secure person, in perilous seasons, is assuredly under the power of some predominant lust, whether it appears, or not. 3. This secure senseless frame is the certain presage of approaching ruin, *This know*, brethren, pray *know this*, I beg of you, for yours and my own soul, that you will be sensible of, and affected with the perils of the season, whereinto we are cast. What they are, if God help me, and give me a little strength, I shall shew you by and by.

Secondly, There is the evil and danger itself thus forewarned of: and that is, *καιροὶ χαλεποὶ*, hard times, *perilous times*, times of great difficulty, like those of publick plagues, when death lies at every door; times that I am sure we shall not all escape, let it fall where it will. I will say no more of it now, because it is that which I shall principally speak to afterwards.

Thirdly, The manner of their introduction, *ἐν ῥιπήσιν*, shall come. We have no word in our language that will express the force of *ἐν ῥιπήσιν*. The *Latines* express it by, *immineo, incido*, the coming down of a fowl unto his prey. Now our translators have given it the greatest force they could. They do not say, *Perilous times will come*, as though they prognosticated future events; but, *Perilous times shall come*. Here is a hand of God in this business: they shall so come, be so instant in their coming, that nothing shall keep them out; they shall instantly press themselves in, and prevail. Our great wisdom then will be to eye the displeasure of God in perilous seasons, since there is a judicial hand of God in them: and we see in ourselves reason enough why they should come. But when shall they come?

Fourthly, They shall come in the last days, *ἐν ἰσχυραῖς ἡμετέρας*. The words *latter*, or *last days*, are taken three ways in Scripture: sometimes for the times of the Gospel, in opposition to the *Judaical Church-state*, as in *Heb. i. 1. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.* And elsewhere it may be taken (though I remember not the place) for days towards the consummation of all things, and the end of the world. And it is taken often for the latter days of Churches, *1 Tim. iv. 1. The spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith.* And so the Apostle *John, 1 Ep. ii. 18. Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.* And that is the season here intended. But yet you may take it in what sense you will: the last days, the days of the Gospel; the last days towards the consummation of all things, and the ends of the world; the last days following the days of the profession of Churches, those called reformed Churches, or our own Churches in the ways wherein we walk; and the last days with many of us, with respect to our lives. In whatever sense the words are taken, it is time for us to look what shall come in these last days.

But the *observation* which at present I shall insist on from the text, is this:

Obs. When Churches have been continued for a while in their profession, and begin to fall under decays therein, perilous seasons shall overtake them, which it will be hard for them to escape. *This know also, that perilous times shall come.*

My design is only to dispose your minds a little to the work of the day: and all I shall do is to shew in several instances what are the things that make a season perilous; and what is our duty with reference unto such perilous seasons, both as to particular perils, and perilous times in general. And it must not be said, as once it was of the prophet *Ezekiel: He prophesied of things a great way off.* We do not prophesy

prophecy of things a great way off; no, we shall speak of things that are even upon us, what we see and know, and is as evident, as if written with the beams of the sun.

1. The first thing that makes a season perilous, is, when the profession of true religion is outwardly maintained under a visible predominancy of horrible lusts and wickedness. And the reason why I name it in the first place is, because it is what the Apostle gives his instance in, in this place: *Perilous times shall come. Why? For many shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God; having a form of Godliness;* maintaining their profession of the truth of religion under a predominancy, a visible, open predominancy of vile lusts, and the practice of horrible sins. This rendered the season perilous. Whether this be such a season or not, do you judge. And I must say by the way, we may and ought to witness against it, and mourn for the publick sins of the days wherein we live. It is as glorious a thing to be a martyr for bearing testimony against the publick sins of an age, as in bearing testimony unto any truth of the Gospel whatsoever.

Now where these things are, a season is perilous,

1. Because of the infection: Churches and professors are apt to be infected in it. The historian tells us of a plague at *Athens*, in the second and third year of the *Peloponnesian* war, whereof multitudes died; and of those that lived, few escaped, but they lost a limb, or part of a limb, some an eye, others an arm, and others a finger; the infection was so great and terrible. And truly, brethren, where this plague comes, of the visible practice of unclean lusts under an outward profession, though men do not die, yet one loses an arm, another an eye, another a leg by it, the infection diffuses itself to the best of professors, more or less. This makes it a dangerous and perilous time.

2. It is dangerous because of the effects; for when predominant lusts have broken all bounds of divine light and rule, how long do you think that humane rules will keep them in order? They break through all in such a season as the Apostle describes. And if they come to break through all humane restraints, as they have broken through divine, they will fill all things with ruin and confusion.

3. They are perilous in the consequence, which is, the judgments of God. When men do not receive the truth in the love of it, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, God will send them strong delusions to believe a lie. So *2 Thes. ii. 10, 11.* is a description how the papacy came upon the world. Men professed the truth of religion, but did not love it; they loved unrighteousness and ungodliness, and God sent them popery. That is the interpretation of the place according to the best divines. Will you profess the truth, and at the same time love unrighteousness? The consequence is security under superstition and ungodliness. This is the end of such a perilous season: and the like may be said as to temporal judgments, which I need not mention.

Let us now consider what is our duty in such a perilous season.

(1.) We ought greatly to mourn for the publick abominations of the world, and of the land of our nativity wherein we live. I would only observe that place in *Ezek. ix.* God sends out his judgments and destroys the city; but before, he sets a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof. You will find this passage referred in your books to *Rev. vii. 3.* *Hurt not the earth nor the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.* I would only observe this, that such only are the servants of God, let men profess what they will, *who mourn for the abominations that are done in the land.* The mourners in one place, are the *servants of God* in the other. And truly, brethren, we are certainly to blame in this matter. We have been almost well contented that men should be as wicked as they would themselves, and we sit still and see what would come of it. Christ hath been dishonoured, the spirit of God blasphemed, and God provoked against the land of our nativity; and yet we have not been affected with these things. I can truly say in sincerity, I bless God, I have sometimes laboured with my own heart about it. But I am afraid we all of us come exceeding short of our duty in this matter. *Rivers of waters,* saith the psalmist,

psalmist, *run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law.* Horrible profanation of the name of God, horrible abominations, which our eyes have seen, and our ears heard, and yet our hearts been unaffected with them! Do you think this is a frame of heart God requireth of us in such a season, to be regardless of all, and not to mourn for the publick abominations of the land. The servants of God will mourn. I could speak, but am not free to speak, to those prejudices which keep us off from mourning for publick abominations; but they may be easily suggested unto all your thoughts, and particularly what they are that have kept us off from attending more unto this duty of mourning for publick abominations. And give me leave to say, that according to the Scripture rule, there is no one of us can have any evidence that we shall escape outward judgments that God will bring for these abominations, if we have not been mourners for them; but that as smart a revenge, as to outward dispensations, may fall upon us, as upon those that are most guilty of them; no Scripture evidence have we to the contrary. How God may deal with us, I know not.

This then is one part of the duty of this day, that we should humble our souls for all the abominations that are committed in the land of our nativity; and in particular, that we have no more mourned under them.

(2.) Our second duty, in reference to this perilous season, is to take care that we be not infected with the evils and sins of it. A man would think it were quite contrary; but really to the best of my observation, this is, and hath been the frame of things, unless upon some extraordinary dispensation of God's spirit: as some mens sins grow very high, other mens graces grow very low. Our Saviour hath told us, *Matth. xxiv. 12. Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many will wax cold.* A man would think the abounding of iniquity in the world should give great provocation to love one another. No, saith our Saviour, the contrary will be found true: as some mens sins grow high, other mens graces will grow low.

And there are these reasons for it:

[1.] In such a season we are apt to have light thoughts of great sins. The prophet looked upon it as a dreadful thing, that upon *Jehoiakim's* throwing the roll of *Jeremiah's* prophecy into the fire, 'till it was consumed, *yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king nor any of his servants, that heard all these words,* Jer. xxxvi. 24. They were grown senseless both of sin and judgment. And where men (be they in other respects never so wise) can grow senseless of sin, they will quickly grow senseless of judgments too. And I am afraid the great reason why many of us have no impression upon our spirits of danger and perils, in the days wherein we live, is, because we are not sensible of sin.

[2.] Men are apt to countenance themselves in lesser evils, having their eyes fixed upon greater abominations of other men, that they behold every day: nay, there are those, who pay their tribute to the Devil, walk in such and such abominations, and so countenance themselves in lesser evils. This is part of the publick infection, that they *do not run out into the same excess of riot, that others do;* tho' they live in the omission of duty, conformity to the world, and in many foolish, hurtful, and noisome lusts. They countenance themselves with this, that others are guilty of greater abominations.

[3.] Pray let such remember this, who have occasion for it, (you may know it better than I, but yet I know it by rule as much as you do by practice) that general converse in the world, in such a season, is full of danger and peril. Most professors are grown of the colour and complexion of those with whom they converse.

This is the first thing that makes a season perilous. I know not whether these things may be of concern and use unto you, they seem so to me, and I cannot but acquaint you with them.

II. A second perilous season, and that we shall hardly come off in, is, when men are prone to forsake the truth, and seducers abound to gather them up that are so: and you will have always these things go together. Do you see seducers abound? You may be sure there is a proneness in the minds of men to forsake the truth: and when there is such a proneness, they will never want seducers, those that will lead off the minds of men from the truth; for there is both the hand of God and Satan in this business. God judicially leaves men, when he sees them grow weary of the truth, and prone to leave it; and Satan strikes in with the occasion, and stirs

up seducers. This makes a season perilous. The Apostle describes it, 1 Tim. iv. 1. *Now the spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times, these perilous days, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. And so Peter warns them to whom he writes, 2 Ep. ii. 1, 2. that there shall come false teachers among them, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction: and many shall follow their pernicious ways. There shall come times full of peril, which shall draw men off from the truth, into destruction.*

If it be asked, how we may know whether there be a proneness in the minds of men in any season to depart from the truth? There are three ways whereby we may judge of it.

1. The first is that mention'd 2 Tim. iv. 3. *The time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.* When men grow weary of sound doctrine, when it is too plain, too heavy, too dull, too common, too high, too mysterious, one thing or other that displeases them, and they would hear something new, something that may please; it is a sign that there is in such an age many who are prone to forsake sound doctrine: and many such we know.

2. When men have lost the power of truth in their conversation, and are as prone and ready to part with the profession of it in their minds. Do you see a man retaining the profession of the truth, under a worldly conversation? He wants but baits from temptation, or a seducer to take away his faith from him. An inclination to hearken after novelties, and loss of the power of truth in the conversation, is a sign of proneness unto this declension from the truth. Such a season, you see, is perilous. And why is it perilous? Because the souls of many are destroyed in it. The Apostle tells us directly, 2 Pet. ii. 1. *of false prophets among the people, who privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.* Will it abide there? No: *And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.* Brethren, while it is well with us through the grace of God, and our own houses are not in flames, pray don't let us think the times are not perilous, when so many turn unto popery and quakerism, into pernicious errors, and fall into swift destruction. Will you say the time of the publick plague was not perilous, because you are alive? No. Was the fire not dreadful, because your houses were not burnt? No. You will notwithstanding say it was a dreadful plague, and a dreadful fire. And pray consider, is not this a perilous season, when multitudes have an inclination to depart from the truth, and God in just judgment hath permitted Satan to stir up seducers to draw them into pernicious ways, and their poor souls perish forever?

Besides, there is a great aptness in such a season to work indifferency in the minds of those who do not intend utterly to forsake the truth. Little did I think, I should ever have lived in this world to find the minds of professors grown altogether indifferent, as to the doctrine of God's eternal election, the sovereign efficacy of grace in the conversion of sinners, justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ; but many are, as to all these things, grown to an indifferency, they know not whether they are so or not. I bless God, I know something of the former generation, when professors would not hear of these things without the highest detestation; and now high professors begin to be leaders in it, and it is too much among the best of us. We are not so much concerned for the truth as our fore-fathers: I wish I could say we were as holy.

3. This proneness to depart from the truth, is a perilous season, because it is the greatest evidence of the withdrawing of the spirit of God from his Church; for the spirit of God is promised to this end, *to lead us into all truth*; and when the efficacy of truth begins to decay, it is the greatest evidence of the departing and withdrawing of the spirit of God. And I think that this is a dangerous thing; for if the spirit of God departs, then our glory and our life departs.

What now is our duty in reference to this perilous season? Forewarnings of perils are given us to instruct us in our duty.

(1.) The first is, not to be content with what you judge a sincere profession of truth, but to labour to be found in the exercise of all those graces which peculiarly respect

respect the truth. There are graces that peculiarly respect the truth, that we are to exercise; and if these are not found in our hearts, all our profession will issue in nothing.

And these are:

[1.] Love: *Because they loved not the truth.* They made profession of the Gospel, but they received not the truth in the love of it. There was want of love of the truth: truth will do no man good, where there is not the love of it. Speaking the truth in love, is the substance of our christian profession. Pray, brethren, let us labour to love the truth, and take off all prejudices from our minds that we may do so.

[2.] It is the great and only rule to preserve us in perilous times, to labour to have the experience of the power of every truth in our hearts. *If so be ye have learned the Lord Jesus.* How? So as to *put off the old man which is corrupt, according to the lusts of the flesh; and to put on the new man, which after God is renewed in righteousness and holiness,* Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24. This is to learn the truth. The great grace that is to be exercised with reference to truth, in such a season as this, is to exemplify it in our hearts, in the power of it. Labour for the experience of the power of every truth in your own hearts and lives.

[3.] Zeal for the truth. Truth is the most proper object for zeal. We ought to *contend earnestly for the truth once delivered to the saints;* to be willing, as God shall help us, to part with name, and reputation, and to undergo scorn and contempt, all that this world can cast upon us, in giving testimony unto the truth. Every thing that this world counts dear and valuable is to be forsaken, rather than the truth. This was the great end for which Christ came into the world.

(2.) Cleave unto the means that God hath appointed and ordained for your preservation in the truth. I see some are ready to go to sleep, and think themselves not concerned in these things; the Lord awaken their hearts. Keep to the means of preservation in the truth; the present ministry. Bless God for the remainder of a ministry valuing the truth, knowing the truth, sound in the faith; cleave unto them. There is little influence upon the minds of men from this ordinance and institution of God in the great business of the ministry. But know there is something more in it, than that they seem to have better abilities to dispute, than you; more knowledge, more light, better understandings than you. If you know no more in the ministry than this, you will never have benefit by it. They are God's ordinance, the name of God is upon them, God will be sanctified in them. They are God's ordinance for the preservation of the truth.

(3.) Let us carefully remember the faith of them who went before us in this nation, in the profession of the last age. I am apt to think there was not a more glorious profession for a thousand years upon the face of the earth, than was among the professors of the last age in this nation. And pray what faith were they of? Were they half *Arminian*, and half *Socinian*; half *Papist*, and half I know not what? Remember how zealous they were for the truth; how little their holy souls would have borne with those publick defections from the doctrine of truth, which we see, and do not mourn over, but make nothing of in the days wherein we live. God was with them, and they lived to his glory, and died in peace, *whose faith follow,* and example pursue, and remember the faith they lived and died in. Look round about and see, whether any of the new creeds have produced a new holiness to exceed theirs.

III. A third thing that makes a perilous season is, professors mixing themselves with the world, and learning their manners. And if the other perilous seasons are come upon us, this is come upon us also. This was the foundation and spring of the first perilous season that was in the world, that first brought in a deluge of sin, and then a deluge of misery. It was the beginning of the first publick apostacy of the Church, which issued in the severest mark of God's displeasure. *Gen. vi. 2. The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and took them wives of all which they chose.* This is but one instance of the Church of God, the sons of God, professors mixing themselves with the world, this was not all, that they took to themselves wives, but this was an instance the Holy Ghost gives, that the Church in those days did degenerate and mix itself with the world. What is the end of mixing themselves in this manner with the world? *Psal. cvi. 35. They mingled themselves with the nations.* And what then? *And learned their manners.* If any thing under

der heaven will make a season perilous, this will do it; when we mingle ourselves with the world, and learn their manners.

There are two things I shall speak to on this head. 1. Wherein professors do mingle themselves with the world. 2. The danger of it.

1. Professors mingle themselves with the world, in that wherein it is the world, which is proper to the world. That which is more eminently and visibly of the Devil, professors do not so soon mingle themselves withal; but in that wherein it is the world, in its own colours. As in corrupt communication, which is the spirit of the world, the extract and fruit of vanity of mind, that wherewith the world is corrupted, and doth corrupt. An evil, rotten kind of communication, whereby the manners of the world are corrupted; this comes from the spirit of the world: the Devil hath his hand in all these things; but it is the world and the spirit of the world that is in corrupt communication. And how hath this spread itself among professors! Light, vain, foolish communication, to spend a man's whole life therein; not upon this or that occasion, but almost always, and upon all occasions every where. Vain habits and attire of the world is another instance. The habits and attire of the world, are the things wherein the world doth design to shew itself what it is. Men may read what the world is by evident characters in the habits and attire that it wears. They are blind that cannot read vanity, folly, uncleanness, Luxury in the attire the world putteth upon itself. The declension of professors in imitating the ways of the world in their habits and garb, makes a season perilous: it is a mixture wherein we learn their manners, and the judgments of God will ensue upon it. In this likewise we are grown like the world, that upon all occasions we are as regardless of the sins of the world, and as little troubled with them, as others are. *Lot lived in Sodom, but his righteous soul was vexed with their ungodly deeds and speeches.* Live we where we will, when are our souls vexed, that we don't pass through the things of the world, the greatest abominations, with the frame of spirit that the world itself doth? Not to speak of voluptuousness of living, and other things that attend this woful mixture with the world, that professors have made in the days wherein we live, corrupt communication, gait of attire, senselessness of the sins and abominations of the world round about us, are almost as much upon professors, as upon the world. We have mixed ourselves with the people, and have learned their manners. But,

2. Such a season is dangerous, because the sins of professors in it lye directly contrary to the whole design of the mediation of Christ in this world. Christ *gave himself for us, that he might purge us from dead works, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people*, Tit. ii. 14. *You are a royal nation, a peculiar people.* Christ hath brought the hatred of the Devil and all the world upon him and against him, for taking a people out of the world, and making them a peculiar people to himself; and their throwing themselves upon the world again, is the greatest contempt that can be put upon Jesus Christ. He gave his life, and shed his blood, to recover us from the world, and we throw ourselves in again. How easy were it to shew, that this is an inlet to all other sins and abominations, and that for which I verily think the indignation and displeasure of God will soonest discover itself against professors and Churches in this day. If we will not be differenced from the world in our ways, we shall not long be differenced from them in our privileges. If we are the same in our walkings, we shall be so in our worship, or have none at all.

As to our duty in such a perilous season, let me leave three cautions with you, and the Lord fix them upon your hearts.

(1.) The profession of religion, and the performance of duties, under a world-like conversation, are nothing but a sophistical means to lead men blindfold into hell. We must not speak little things in such a great cause.

(2.) If you will be like the world, you must take the world's lot. It will go with you as it goes with the world. Enquire and see in the whole book of God, how it will go with the world, what God's thoughts are of the world, whether it saith not, If it lies in wickedness, it shall come to judgment, and that the curse of God is upon it. If therefore you will be like the world, you must have the world's lot; God will not separate.

(3.) Lastly, consider we have by this means lost the most glorious cause of truth that ever was in the world. We do not know that there hath been a more glorious cause of truth since the Apostle's days, than what God hath committed to his

Church

Church and people in this nation, for the purity of the doctrine of the truth and ordinances; but we have lost all the beauty and glory of it by this mixture in the world. I verily think it is high time, that the congregations in this city, by their elders and messengers, should consult together how to put a stop to this evil, that hath lost all the glory of our profession. It is a perilous time when professors mix themselves so with the world.

There are other perilous seasons that I thought to have insisted on; but I will but name them.

IV. When there is great attendance on outward duties, but inward, spiritual decays. Now herein, my brethren, (most of this congregation are so in a peculiar manner) I hope, through the goodness of God, in sincerity, though in much weakness, *Liberaui animam meam*. You know how long I have been treating of the causes and reasons of inward decays, and the means to be used for our recovery: I shall not therefore again insist upon them.

V. Times of persecution are also times of peril.

Now I need not tell you whether these seasons are upon us, or not; it is your duty to enquire into that. Whether there be not an outward retaining of the truth, under a visible prevalency of abominable lusts in the world; whether there be not a proneness to forsake the truth, and seducers at work to draw men off; whether there be not a mingling ourselves with the world, and therein learning their manners; whether there be not inward decays, under the outward performance of duties; and whether many are not suffering under persecution and trouble; judge ye, and act accordingly.

One word of *use*, and I have done.

Use 1. Let us all be exhorted to endeavour to get our hearts affected with the perils of the day wherein we live. You have heard a poor, weak discourse concerning it, and perhaps it will be quickly forgotten. O, that God would be pleas'd to give in this Grace, that we may find it our duty to endeavour to have our hearts affected with the perils of these seasons! It is not time to be asleep upon the top of a mast in a rough sea, when there are so many devouring dangers round about us. And the better to effect this,

(1.) Consider the present things, and bring them to rule, and see what God's word says of them. We hear this and that story of horrible, prodigious wickedness, and bring it in the next opportunity of talk, and there slightly pass it over. We hear of the judgments of God abroad in the world, and bring them to the same standard of our own imaginations, and there is an end. And so we do with the distresses of others; we talk of them, and there is an end. But, brethren, when you observe any of these things, how it is with the world, if you would have your hearts affected, bring it to the word, and see what God saith of it, speak with God about it, ask and enquire at the mouth of God, what God saith unto these prodigious wickednesses, and judgments, this coldness that is upon professors, and their mixtures with, and learning the manners of the world. You will never have your hearts affected with it, till you come and speak with God about it, and then you will find them represented in a glass that will make your hearts ake and tremble. And then

(2.) If you would be sensible of present perilous times, take heed of centring in self. While your greatest concern is self, or the world, all the angels in heaven cannot make you sensible of the peril of the days wherein you live. Whether you pursue riches, or honours, while you center there, nothing can make you sensible of the perils of the day. Therefore do not center in self.

(3.) Pray that God would give us grace to be sensible of the perils of the day wherein we live. It may be we have had confidence, that though thousands fall at our right hand, and at our left, yet we shall be able to carry it through. Believe me, it is great grace. Point your private, closet prayers, and your family prayers this way; and the Lord help us to point our publick prayers to this thing, that God would make our hearts sensible of the perils of the time whereinto we are fallen in these last days.

Use 2. The next thing is this, that there are two things in a perilous season: The sin of it, and the misery of it. Labour to be sensible of the former, or you will never be sensible of the latter. Though judgments lye at the door; though the heavens be dark over us, and the earth shake under us at this day, and no wise man can see

where he can build himself an abiding habitation; we can talk of these things, and hear of other nations soaking in blood, and have tokens of God's displeasure, warnings from heaven above, and the earth beneath, and no man sensible of them. Why? Because they are not sensible of sin, nor ever will be, unless God make them so.

I shall range the sins that we should be sensible of, under three heads: The sins of the poor, wretched, perishing world in the first place: the sins of professors in general in the second place: and our own particular sins and decays in the third place. And let us labour to have our hearts affected with these. It is to no purpose to tell you this and that judgment is approaching; for your leaders, and those that are upon the watch tower, to cry, *A lion, my Lord*, we see a lion. Unless God make our hearts sensible of sin, we shall not be sensible of judgments.

Use 3. Remember there is a special frame of spirit required in us all in such perilous seasons as these are. And what is that? It is a mourning frame of spirit. O, that frame, that jolly frame of spirit that is upon us! The Lord forgive it, the Lord pardon it unto us, and keep us in an humble, broken, mournful frame of spirit: for it is a peculiar grace God looks for at such a time as this is. When he will *pour out his spirit*, there will be great mourning together and apart; but now we may say there is no mourning. The Lord help us, we have hard hearts, and dry eyes under the consideration of all these perils that lye before us.

Use 4. Keep up Church watch with diligence, and by the rule. When I say rule, I mean the life of it. I have no greater jealousy upon my heart, than that God should withdraw himself from his own institutions, because of the sins of the people, and leave us only the carcass of outward rule and order. What doth God give them for? for their own sakes? no; but that they may be cloathing for faith and love, meekness of spirit, and bowels of compassion, watchfulness and diligence. Take away these, and farewell to all outward rule and order, whatever they are. Keep up a spirit that may live affected with it; get a spirit of Church watch, which is not to lye at catch for faults, but diligently, out of pure love and compassion to the souls of men, to watch over them, to wait to do them good all we can. As it was with a poor man, who took a dead body and set it up, and it fell; and he set it up again, and it fell; upon which he cryed out, *Oportet esse aliquid intus, there wants something within* to enliven and quicken it: so is it with Church order and rule; set them up as often as you will, they will all fall, if there be not a love to one another, a delighting in the good of one another, *exhorting one another while it is called to day, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

Use 5. Reckon upon it, that in such times as these are, all of us will not go free. You find no mention of a perilous season in Scripture, but it follows; some shall have their faith overthrown, others shall follow pernicious ways; and others shall turn aside. Brethren, and sisters, how do you know but you or I may fall? Let us double our watch every one, for the season is come upon us, wherein some of us may fall, and fall so as to smart for it. I do not say we shall perish eternally; God deliver us from going into the pit; but some of us may so fall as to lose a limb, some member or other, and our works will be committed to the fire, that shall burn them all. God hath kindled a fire in *Zion* that will try all our works; and we shall see in a short time what will become of us.

Use 6. Lastly, take that great rule, which the Apostle gives in such times as these wherewith we are concerned: *Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure.* O, blessed be God for it! *God knows who are his.*

What then is required on our part? *Let him that nameth the name of God depart from evil.* Your profession, your privileges, your light will not secure you; you are gone unless every one that nameth the name of Christ departs from all iniquity. What multitudes perish under a profession every day? O, that our hearts could bleed to see poor souls in danger of perishing under the greatest profession!

Will you hear the sum of all? Perilous times and seasons are come upon us, many are wounded already, many have failed, the Lord help us, the crown is fallen from our head, the glory of our profession is gone, the time is short, the judge stands before the door. Take but this one word of counsel, my brethren, *Watch therefore, that none of these things may come upon you, but that you may escape, and be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of God.*

* S E R M O N XVII.

The Evil and Danger of Offences.

MATTH. xviii. 7.

Wo unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be that offences come: but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh.

IT is very evident that our Lord Jesus Christ lays very great weight upon this matter of offences. He represents them like a two-edged sword, that cuts both ways: *Wo unto the world because of offences: wo to them by whom offences come*: he knits these two things together. It must needs be that there must be offences; God hath appointed it, and it must be so. He doth not merely tell us, it will be; but, it *must be*; God hath ordered that so it shall be.

I will speak a few things in reference to offences that may be of use unto us; without looking into the depth of this great matter of offence and scandal; than which, I must needs say, I never yet saw any thing less enquired into, though there is no subject more written upon, and spoken to. We should consider for ourselves the time wherein we may be sure offences will abound. It is necessary from this wonderful caution of Christ here given, *Wo, wo, it must be*, that we should consider the times wherein it is likely offences will abound. And if all those times should prove to be upon us, certainly it is our duty to be wary.

First, The first is a time of persecution. Offences will abound in a time of persecution to the ruin of many professors. So our Saviour tells us, *Matth. xiii. One received the seed of the word, and it sprang up; but when persecution for the word arose, immediately he was offended*: Wo unto him, he is gone.

Secondly, A time of the abounding of great sins is a time of giving and taking great offence. This the Holy Spirit speaks expressly, that *in the latter days there shall be perilous times*. All perils arise from offences. And why? Mens lusts shall abound. When there is an abounding of lusts, there will be an abounding of offences, that make the times perilous.

Thirdly, When there is a decay of Churches, when they grow cold, and are under decays, it is a time of the abounding of offences: *Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold*. That is a time when offences will abound; such as all the Churches of Christ seem to be under at this day. All the virgins, wife and foolish, are asleep. It is what I have told you often, and I wish I could say I have told you without weeping, that we are under woful decays, falling from our first faith, love, and works.

Now if all these times should be upon us: a time of persecution, as it is now throughout the world; saith the Apostle, *Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, for all that befalls you, brethren, in the world*: a time of the abounding of great sin in men; I need not enlarge upon this: and a time of great decays in all

* This Sermon was preached Sept. 30. 1681.

Churches: if it be thus with us, certainly it is very proper for us to look upon this warning of our Saviour: *Take heed of offences.*

Offences are of two sorts.

I. Such as are taken only, and not given.

II. Such as are given, and taken also.

I. Such as are taken only, and not given. The great offence taken was at Jesus Christ himself. God appointed Christ to be the greatest offence in the world, *Isa. viii.* He had design'd him to be a stumbling-block, and a rock of offence, an insuperable offence. The poverty of Christ in the world, and his cross were the rock of offence, whereat both *Jews* and Gentiles stumbled and fell, and ruined themselves unto eternity. Now the Apostle disputes, *1 Cor. i.* that this was an offence taken, and not given. How does he prove it? Why that wherein God puts forth his wisdom and his power is no offence given, but merely taken. But in Christ crucified God put forth his power. Let him be as poor in the world as he will, let him be crucified, there is the wisdom and the power of God in it, and therefore there can be no just offence.

This offence taken, and not given, is encreased by the poverty of the Church. You see your calling, brethren; *Not many great, not many wise, not many noble.* In plain *English*, you are a company of poor, weak, persecuted people. But saith the Apostle, this is no offence given; God chooses the things that are not, to bring to nought things that are. These things are an offence taken, and not given.

II. There are offences given and taken.

1. Offences given: and they are mens publick sins, and the miscarriages of professors that are under vows and obligations to honourable obedience. Men may give offence by errors, and miscarriages in Churches, and by immoralities in their lives. This was in the sin of *David*; God would pass by every thing but offence given: *Because thou hast made my name to be blasphem'd*, therefore I will deal so and so. What a talk did it occasion throughout the world? There is your holy man, your godly man, your *David*, a praying man; do you hear what a noise there is concerning him? *Thou hast made my name to be blasphem'd*, saith God, and this is a great provocation. So God speaks of the people of *Israel*: These were my people, by reason of you my name is profaned among the Gentiles. These are the people of the Lord; see now they are come into captivity, what a vile people they are. Such things are an offence given.

2. Offences taken: now offences are taken two ways.

(1.) As they occasion grief; and (2.) sin. A given offence may be taken either of these ways.

(1.) As they occasion grief. *Rom. xiv.* See that by thy miscarriage thou *grieve not thy brother*. Mens offences who are professors, are a grief, trouble, and burden to those who are concerned in the same course of profession. But herein appears the wisdom of God, when he doth in his sovereignty sometimes suffer persons to give offence that may be sanctified unto the great advantage of the Church. I am persuaded the Church of *Corinth* was in so much disorder, that it had gone near to have been lost, if God had not suffered one among them to fall into a scandalous sin. But see what the end was. You find in the *first Epistle* the disorder they were in, and what a scandalous sin fell out among them: and in the *second Epistle*, the sorrow upon it; when they knew it, they took offence, and were grieved at it: *For behold that ye sorrowed after a godly sort; what carefulness it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, ye what vehement desire, yea what zeal, yea what revenge. In all things, saith the Apostle, ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.* I look upon it to have been the greatest sanctified means that God appointed for the humiliation, recovery, and saving of that Church, that he suffered in his sovereign wisdom, such an offence to fall out among them. That is the first thing: and let us lay it up in our minds, that we may not be moved and shaken; for I speak with a prospect of what is to come, and not of what is come: *Offences will come*; and therefore let us remember, that God can sanctify the greatest offences to our humiliation and recovery, and to the saving of our Church. Such is his infinite wisdom.

(2.) Given

(2.) Given offences occasion sin. There comes the *wo*, as to the world; for there is no *wo* from offences to them who are truly humbled for them, grieved at them, and made thereby watchful over themselves and their own ways. But now when offences are made an occasion of sin, as in the world, the world takes no offence at all by their own sins, nor by the sins of one another. Let them be what they will, let their teachers be as scandalous in their lives as possible, they are not grieved nor concerned: and the reason is in that saying of *David*, 1 Sam. xxiv. 13. *As saith the proverb of the ancients*, (it was a saying from the flood, if not from the beginning of the world) *Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked*. Look for nothing but wickedness from wicked men. So that it is no offence at all to see wicked men do wicked things. They do not take offence at one another; nor doth the Church of God take offence; for, as saith the proverb, they can do no otherwise. To shew you how men are hardned in their prejudices against the truth, and confirmed in all their course by offences, would be too long a work for me to declare. But offences given are an occasion of sin, even among professors and believers themselves.

The worst way whereby a given offence is thus taken, is, when men countenance themselves in private sins by others publick sins; and go on in vices because they see such and such commit greater. *Wo* unto us if we so take offence. Again, a given offence is taken, when our minds are provoked, exasperated, and carried off from a spirit of love and tenderness towards those that offend, and all others, and when we are discouraged and despond, as though the ways of God would not carry us out. This is to take offence to our disadvantage.

Thus I have shewed you the great weight and import that is to be laid upon this matter of offence, as being the greatest aggravation of sin.

I have shewed you the times wherein offences will abound: a time of persecution; a time of the increase of abominable sins; and a time of the decay of Churches; such as are upon us.

I have likewise shewed you, there are offences taken only, and not given; Christ and his cross, the poverty of the Church, its persecution and distress in all places, and the hopes and fears of all mankind at present, that it will be ruin'd. These are offences taken only, and not given, being all suited to the wisdom, goodness, and righteousness of God. There are offences also that are given by outward, known, publick sins of persons, who are under evangelical obligations to more honourable obedience. And under this head we might bring in every thing we see or hear, but some more gross than others. And these offences occasion either grief and sorrow; and then they prove a sanctified means in the hand of God for the Churches good, making them more watchful and careful for the future: or they occasion sin, both by the world, and by professors; and there comes the *wo*.

I shall give you a few *rules* from hence, and so conclude.

Rule 1. The giving offence being a great aggravation of sin, let this rule lye continually in your hearts, that the more publick persons are, the more careful they ought to be, that they give no offence either to *Jew* or *Gentile*, or to *the Church of Christ*. Why doth the Apostle put *Jew* and *Gentile* before *the Church of Christ*? Because more evil will ensue upon it, and more disadvantage unto the souls of men. Let this be our rule in walking, especially those of us whose occasions do call us unto more converse in the world, let us always endeavour to give no offence to *Jew* or *Gentile*, or to *the Church of God*.

2. If what I have laid down be your first and your main rule, I doubt, where this is neglected, there is want of sincerity; but where it is your principal rule, there is nothing but hypocrisy. Men may walk by this rule, and have corrupt minds, and cherish wickedness in their hearts. If this be the principal rule that guides you, that you will carry it so complyingly, that you will give no offence, this is worse than neglecting the rule in the first case; that argues want of sincerity, this a certain predominancy of hypocrisy. The principal rule commands conscience to God in all sincerity, and the second, to give no offence; and if we make this our first rule, we are not upright with God. And therefore let none please themselves that they walk according to rule, if the internal power of God be not found in their souls.

3. Be not afraid of the great multiplication of offences at this day in the world. The truths of the Gospel and holiness have broke through a thousand times more offences. They have broke through heresies, and blasphemies, and poverty, and persecution.

secution. God hath still preserved his people, who have broke through, and got the conquest over the greatest offences: over offences taken, in the cross of Christ, in the poverty of Christ, in persons that have preached the Gospel, and in those who have professed it: over offences given, in innumerable swarms of blasphemous hereticks who have professed the name of Christ from the beginning; in false reports that have been cast upon Christians, being reported generally throughout the world, to be a vile generation of wicked persons. The truth and grace of God hath conquered all these offences, and prevailed over them all, and will do so again, if we keep close unto truth, and the power of religion.

4. Beg of God wisdom to manage yourselves under offences: and of all things take heed of that great evil which professors have been very apt to run into; I mean, to receive and promote reports of offence among themselves, taking hold of the least colour or pretence to report such things as are matter of offence, and give advantage to the world. Take heed of this, it is the design of the Devil to load professors with false reports. And if so, he is not a wise man, nor she a wise woman, that stand not upon their guard, when they see an engine the Devil often makes use of, who when he hath raised false reports, and wounded divers, is greatly pleased, and careth not if afterwards they be discovered to be false, as knowing that he hath done his work; for hereby he hath drawn out and embittered the spirits of men one against another. And therefore stand upon your guard, and know it is the Devil's engine, tho' you see not his hand in the managing of it.

* S E R M O N XVIII.

Christ's Pastoral Care.

MICAH vii. 14.

Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old.

IT is not much I shall offer unto you from these words; yet I cannot give you a right apprehension of the mind of God in them, and what I intend from them, without a little going over the *chapter* from the beginning: *Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, &c. ver. 1.* When the prophet says, *Wo is me*, he speaks in the name of the earth, say some, as it was the seat of the Church of God: I rather take it to be in the name of the Church of God, of those who were truly so, in the midst of a profane, but outwardly professing people. And this lamentation is with a prospect and view of the sin which was in the people, and of the misery which was coming upon them. They have both of them ever been matter of lamentation unto all that truly fear God. They cannot consider the sins and the miseries of an outwardly professing people, but every one of them ought to cry, *Wo is me; sorrow is to me; sadness of heart is to me.* In respect of sin *David* saith, *Psal. cxix. 136. Rivers*

of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law. And in respect of misery and judgments, *Jeremiah* expresses his sense thus, *chap. ix. 1. O that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.* The prophet foreseeing both these, an overflowing of sin, and an overflowing of judgment, had reason to cry, *Wo is me, it is a lamentation unto me.*

He gives an account of the state of the professing, visible Church, which he looks upon to be like unto a field or a vineyard after the harvest is past, and the vintage over: *I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage:* there is no cluster to eat: my soul desireth the first ripe fruit. His prayer was, that they might be a fruitful vineyard unto God; but saith he, we are just as when the vintage is over, there are some grapes, some clusters left under the leaves, but the principal are taken off: and not only so, but when a field is reaped, or a vineyard gathered, the owner leaves it for a season, takes down the fence, and the beasts come in and prey upon it, until the time of culture and tillage is come again. God never leaves a professing Church to be a wilderness, unless upon the utmost apostasy; but he many times leaves them to be as a field after harvest, or a vineyard after the vintage. God will leave *Babylon* to be as a wilderness, that shall never be tilled any more, shall have no rain, no fences, no tillage: but he will not leave his Church so, unless the utmost apostasy come. In like manner, when a man hath gathered in his corn out of the field, you would think he had thrown off all his care about it, the fence is broken down, and the beasts come in; it lies in common, men ride over it, and trample upon it, and he lets it alone: but when the time of culture is come again, the man makes up his fence, drives out the cattle, tills the ground again, and sows it with good seed, that it may bring forth good fruit. So God deals frequently with his Church. He dealt so with them here. He takes down the hedge, he suffers the wild beasts to come in, lets persons spoil at their pleasure: but there will come a time of culture again, when he will have fruit brought forth unto his praise.

In *ver. 2.* the prophet refers the evil he complained of, unto two heads: First, that those who were good were very few; and Secondly, that those who were evil were very bad. *The good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men; they all lye in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net.* This phrase, *The good man is perished out of the earth,* is not that the good man perisheth, but that he is taken away, and the earth hath lost the benefit and advantage which it had by him. The same expression is used, *Isa. lvii. 1. The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and the merciful men are taken away.* And *Psal. xii. 1. The godly man ceaseth, the faithful fail from among the children of men.*

From hence therefore we may observe, that when the good are very few, and the bad are very bad, inevitable destruction lies at the door of that place or nation. If either of these be otherwise, there is yet hope. If there had been but ten good men in *Sodom*, it had been spared. If the sin of the *Amorites* had not been come to the full, they had not been ruin'd. If the good therefore are not very few, or the bad very bad, there is yet hope; but where both concur in a professing nation, as in this, which was the visible Church of God, unavoidable destruction is at the door, there is neither hope nor recovery: and therefore they that endeavour to make men good, to encrease the number of the good, they do not only endeavour to save their own souls, but they endeavour to save the nation from ruin. And we will place our plea and our cause there, wherein we are engaged in this world, against the world, and those that do reproach us, that our design is to save the nation so far as we are able; for it is to encrease the number of the good, to convert men unto God, the consequence of which is to preserve the nation: and it will at last be found, that they who are useful herein, do more for the preservation of the nation, than armies or navies can do. But when the prophet says, *The good man perisheth, and there is none upright among men,* it is an hyperbolical expression, intimating, that there are but few that are either good or upright.

From the description of the other part of men, you may observe two things: First, the instance of their sin: Secondly, the manner of the prosecution of it. The instance

instance of their sin was *blood*; which word comprises all violence, oppression, cruelty, and persecution: and the way of prosecuting this evil is with much diligence and great endeavours: *They lye in wait for blood; and they hunt every man his brother.* Or as 'tis expressed *ver. 3. They do evil with both hands earnestly.* And where men do lay out all their wisdom, and all their industry and strength in the pursuit of sin, there also destruction lies at the door. When men are slothful, careless, negligent, sensual in all other things; but industrious only in doing evil, this is another thing the prophet lays down, as a certain sign of approaching destruction.

Having spoken this of the body of the people, he divides them into two parts; the rulers, and the residue of the people: and the rulers he also distributes into three sorts; *the prince, the judge, and the great man.* Thus saith he, *The prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward, and the great man uttereth his mischievous desire,* *ver. 3.* I shall not particularly open these words, but this is what the prophet would teach us: that when there is, as it were, a conspiracy in all sorts of rulers to commit the same iniquity, and to *wrap up* the whole business by agreement among themselves; so that there is none to intercede, none to stand in the gap, none to do otherwise; that lies in a tendency to those judgments which he will afterwards declare. And this was the state of affairs at that time: for this prophecy was given in the days of *Abaz*; and there was a great agreement and conspiracy among all in power then to oppress, and to carry on their own covetous and *mischievous desires*, as they could: they agreed together, and so *wrapped it up*.

In *ver. 4.* he speaks as to the residue of the people: *The best of them,* saith he, *is as a briar; the most upright is sharper than a thorn-hedge.* The prophet, after he had laid so great a charge upon them, seems to reflect upon some that made a great pretence of friendliness to the Church of God, pretending they would be an hedge, a fence unto it; but, saith he, they prove *briars and a thorn-hedge.* This hypocritical part of the nation, who speak so fair, and make such a mighty appearance of friendship, yet when a man presses upon them, tear and rend him, and give him nothing but trouble and vexation; whatever pretences they make, there is nothing to be expected from them but what you would look for from briars and thorns. And I observe that the prophet, upon this occasion of dealing with this hypocritical part of the people, doth insert a threatening as though the judgment should fall more upon them, than those whose open wickedness he had before described. Therefore *the day of thy watchmen, and thy visitation cometh:* that is, the day which the watchmen had so often declared would come upon them, for their false and hypocritical dealing with God: *now shall be their perplexity.* When false professors make a specious pretence to relieve the Church, but really neither design nor effect any thing for them, but farther vexation and rending; the day of the watchmen is then at hand.

In the 5 and 6 *verses*, he sheweth that this universal corruption that was among the people had extended itself to all sorts of relations, that there was nothing of confidence left even among relations. *Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide; keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.* It is a sign of extream confusion when disorder breaks in among relations, and all grounds of confidence between them are taken away. But this place is applied by our Saviour particularly unto the time of persecution for the Gospel, *Luke xii. 53. Matth. x. 35, 36.* There is no wilderness doth so debauch the nature of man, and break off all confidence in the nearest and strongest relations, as an enmity to godliness and persecution thereon. When once they are engaged in this, then, saith our Saviour, it shall be so and so.

This being the state and condition of the people of the land, the prophet makes in the name of the Church a threefold application of himself, *first* to God, *ver. 7. secondly*, to her enemies, *ver. 8, 10.* and *thirdly*, to himself, *ver. 9.*

First, Upon the prospect of this state and condition, he makes application to God: *Therefore I will look unto the Lord,* saith he, *I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me,* *ver. 7.* When all things are in confusion, and at a loss, the people of God are not discouraged from looking unto God; yea, they are encouraged

encouraged thereunto; and it is made necessary for them so to do. And in such a season not to be looking peculiarly unto God, is an evidence of an heart insensible of the state and condition of the Church of God.

Secondly, The prophet in the name of the Church applies himself unto her enemies: *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her, which said unto me; Where is the Lord thy God? Mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets,* ver. 8, 10.

We may observe here,

1. Who this enemy is: *She that is mine enemy.* Some say one thing, some another. Certainly it is some false Church, it may be *Babylon*, or *Samaria*, or the false professors among themselves. But as *Samaria* was not yet carried captive, I take it most probably to be the false worshipers of *Dan* and *Bethel*, the false Church that dwelt in the same land with them. There is no enemy to the true Church of God, like the false Church.

2. Wherein this her enemy did shew her enmity. He doth not speak of those enemies that outwardly wasted and destroyed them; but of that enemy which said unto her: *Where is now the Lord thy God?* That enemy which reproached them with their profession of faith in God, their nearness unto God, and of God's accepting of them, which is the reproach of the false Church continually. Others that are open heathens don't think so much of it; but the false Churches reproach usually is: *Where is the Lord your God?* Where are your prayers and waitings upon God? Where is your confidence in him?

3. She intimates that there was some countenance in her present state and condition, through the providence of God, given to the enemy, thus to reproach her: *Rejoice not against me, O my enemy, when I fall.* There is a fall that gives countenance to this enemy so to reproach her. But to all these reproaches she opposes her confidence in God: *My God will save me.* And she comforts herself, that the time was coming, when God would certainly destroy this enemy of his Church; this enemy, that is, any Church of false worshipers, who reproach the Church of God under their straits and difficulties with former trusting and confidence in God.

Thirdly, He applies to himself, personating the Church, ver. 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him,* &c. Here is a very becoming frame under the present state of affliction; a deep humiliation for sin, and a quiet submission to the corrections of God's hand: but at the same time here is express'd the firm resolution of faith, to wait till God should plead her cause, and execute judgment on her enemies: there seems to be the utmost confidence in this case: *He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.*

The issue of the whole of this prophecy, is the deliverance of the Church, and that restoration which was accomplished in part in the deliverance of this people a long while after out of captivity. *In the day that thy walls are to be built, in that day shall the decree be far removed. In that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria, &c.* All the people that have been scattered about shall be gathered to *Zion*, to worship God in his temple, ver. 11, 12. But when he had said this, he doth, as it were, correct himself. Ay, but stay, that is not yet to come, ver. 13. *Notwithstanding, saith he, the land shall be desolate, because of them which dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings.* As if he had said; Notwithstanding all this, though God hath thoughts and a purpose of mercy for his own, hidden, secret people; yet there is a time when he will by no means turn away the judgments that are due unto the provocations of the generality of professors. God will indeed do all these things for his Church in the appointed time; but *notwithstanding the land shall be desolate*, there is no avoiding that. The description of things given before is such, that there can be no issuing of it but in the desolation of the land; because of the wickedness of them that dwell therein, and for the fruit of their doings.

I have made these short observations upon this part of the Chapter to give you the state of things here represented. The land was full of sin, and of horrible provocations of God amongst all sorts of people from the highest to the lowest. The people of God secretly complain hereof, and bear it as their burthen, and tremble

at the thoughts of judgments approaching. God had irrevocably, irrecoverably decreed desolation upon the whole land. Things were so stated, that whatever might be the mercy and goodness of God and his thoughts towards his people, notwithstanding, the land was to be desolate.

In this state and condition, the prophet puts up this request: *Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.*

The observation I shall make from the words is this:

Obj. In the most calamitous season, in the greatest inundation of sin and judgment, under the unavoidableness of publick judgments, there is yet ground for faith to plead with God for the preservation, safety, and deliverance of his people.

All these things are here laid down: a calamitous season; an inundation of sin and judgment; and an irrecoverable purpose of God to destroy the land: yet faith, I say, hath ground in this state and condition to plead with God for the preservation and protection of his own secret people. You will say, this is no great matter. It may be we have heard arguments that God will preserve them, and deliver them; and have heard the time computed, when God will deliver them, and I could say *Amen* to it. But it is to no purpose to go farther in teaching, than in endeavours to raise up our faith and believing. I confess I can go no farther than this, that I have ground for duty; and to leave all the rest to God's sovereignty. If God should inevitably decree to destroy this nation; yet we have ground for faith to plead with God for the preservation and deliverance of his own inheritance.

I shall go no farther than the text to prove it: for the opening the text, and the proof of the doctrine will be one and the same.

In the words we have,

I. What is prayed for, what the prophet pleads for, and that is: *Feed thy people with thy rod.*

II. There are the arguments of faith the prophet pleads in this condition, when God had inevitably decreed desolation to the whole land: and these are four. 1. That they were God's people: *Feed thy people.* 2. That they were the flock of his heritage: *Feed thy people, the flock of thine heritage.* 3. That they *dwelt solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel.* 4. That God had in former days *fed them in Bashan and Gilead.*

I shall briefly handle these things, and both shew you what is prayed for, and what in these arguments faith hath to plead in such a condition. For though God may say concerning a nation, *Plead no more for it;* yet he never saith so concerning his own people.

I. We shall consider what the prophet here prays for; which is, that God would feed his people with his rod: *Feed thy people with thy rod.* God is here compared to a shepherd; and it is a relation that he doth very frequently in Scripture take to himself: and you know what a large field I have to walk in, if I would insist upon the allusion. God is a shepherd, and Christ is a shepherd; therefore he saith: *Feed thy people with thy rod.* The word *וַיִּטֶּן* here used sometimes is put for a *scepter*, wherewith kings rule; sometimes for a *staff*; and sometimes for a *rod*. It was the instrument, whatever it was, that shepherds used in those days. It is mentioned, *Psal. xxiii.* which is a great description of God, as a shepherd: *Thy rod and thy staff:* the same word as here. God, as a shepherd, rules his people with a rod, which they used both for direction and correction. He will not strike his sheep with great and violent instruments to break their bones, to destroy them; but he makes them know he hath a rod in his hand. But I take it, that this rod was principally for the direction of the flock: and he prays that God would *feed them with his rod.* Truly we have reason to consider what is in this word, because I think here is a rule of faith given us what we are to pray for the people of God, in such a day as we have described. The great thing we are to pray for now, is, that God would *feed them:* not that God would make them kings, and rulers, and great men, and give them the necks of their enemies to tread upon, and such kind of things; but when things are thus, saith he, your prayer should be, that God would *feed them.* There are three things in this feeding of God's people,

1. That

1. That God would supply their spiritual and temporal wants, that they may be preserved from great distresses: this is in the word. *Rev. xii. 6. The woman fled into the wilderness, and God fed her there.* While the woman was in the wilderness, she was preserved with such spiritual and temporal supplies, as kept her from destroying distresses. This we may pray for, this we have a rule for, when we fear inevitable desolation is approaching upon a nation; God allows us to pray, and gives us a ground of faith to pray, that for his own people he would provide spiritual and temporal supplies, so as they may be kept from great distresses.

2. There is in this feeding of them as a shepherd, that God, in that state which is coming upon them, would give them pledges, singular pledges of his own tenderness and love. It is so said of Christ under the like comparison, *Isa. xl. 11. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd.* How is that? *He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.* We have this in the rule of faith for prayer at this day, that God would deal with all believers of all sorts according to their weakness, and according to their wants; that when the day of visitation, and the day of perplexity comes upon the world, Christ in a way of feeding would suit himself to every one's condition. Some may be more able to be driven before, others must be carried in his arms, and in his bosom. We must pray therefore, that he will deal with every one of them according to their state and condition.

3. By feeding is intended rule, protection, deliverance; present rule and protection, and deliverance in God's appointed time. It is not for a shepherd merely to carry his flock into good pasture; but he is to take care to preserve them from all evil, whereunto they are exposed. *David*, that great shepherd, who was a type of Christ, gives this account of himself: *I was a shepherd, and I kept my Father's sheep; and there came out a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I followed him, and smote him; and when he rose up against me, I took him by the beard and slew him,* 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35. This was part of *David's* care as a shepherd over his sheep. Feeding is ruling in the word here used: and *chap. v. 4.* it manifestly intends rule and protection: *He shall stand and feed [or rule] in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall abide.* It is such a feeding of Christ in the majesty and in the power of God, as his people shall be preserved by. We have therefore in our rule particularly this compriz'd, thus far we may go; necessary supplies of spiritual and temporal, inward and outward mercies; grace and mercy towards all, according as their state and condition doth require; to the weak, diseased, those that are great with young, protection, and powerful deliverance in God's good time.

This is the first thing, What it is we have a rule to pray for, even in the most calamitous season, and when inevitable destruction is decreed against a place or nation.

II. Let us now consider the arguments of faith to be pleaded in this case, which our text affords. And these, as I have said, are four.

I would only first observe of these arguments in general, that there is no one of them taken from any thing of worth, of desert, from any thing of good, nay nor of grace that is in the people themselves; but they are all taken from God himself, and the relation which they have to God, and what God had formerly done for them. Whatever pleadings or arguings in such a day we may have in our own spirits with God for safety and protection, if they are secretly influenced with thoughts that we are good, and better than others, there is nothing of faith in our arguings. God knows, all the graces and fruits of all believers and professors in this nation considered in themselves, will not make up one argument. But to proceed:

1. The first argument the prophet here uses, is, that they were the people of God: *Feed thy people.* They were the people of God upon a threefold account, each of which contains an argument.

(1.) They are the people of God upon the account of election. Christ commands the Apostle to abide preaching the Gospel at *Corinth* with this argument; *I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city,* Acts xviii. 10. They were the people of God by election; God had eternally chosen them, and designed them to be converted by the Gospel, by the preaching of his ministry.

Will

Will this afford any argument to plead with God? Yes: *Luke xviii. 7, 8. Shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him; though he tarry long? I tell you he will avenge them speedily.* The argument for vengeance is from his peoples being his elect: *Shall he not avenge his elect?* There is something in God's decree of election and choosing his people, that may be pleaded with him for the highest part of feeding, which is to avenge them of their enemies.

(2.) They are the people of God by purchase and acquisition. This was the great plea under the Old Testament. *The people of the Lord whom thou hast redeemed with an high hand, and with a stretched out arm:* whom thou hast taken out of the world, and planted for thyself. He made it his argument to plead with God, because they were his people by purchase and acquisition; *by an high hand, and by an outstretched arm.* And the argument is grown more strong under the Gospel, because they are purchased by the blood of his Son: *Rom. viii. 32. If God spared not his own Son, but gave him up to death for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* The people we plead for, are God's elect people, and he will avenge his elect speedily; they are God's purchased people, and that purchased with the blood of his Son; and will he not together with him give them all things, all necessary things, all things that pertain to life and godliness? Here is ground for faith to plead with God in such a case.

(3.) They are God's people by covenant. This is that which makes up their relation, which is prepared in election, acquisition, purchase, and redemption; but the formal denomination arises from the covenant. *Jer. xxxii. 38, 40. I will make a covenant with them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God:* that compleats the relation. *Hosea ii. 23.* speaks also to the same purpose.

What arguments arise from hence, that they are the covenant people of God? The sum of all arguments that can be pleaded upon that head, and they are great and many, are all laid down, *Luke i. 68, &c. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, &c. as he hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began; that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant: the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives.* Here is all we have warrant to pray for; all that is comprized in God's feeding of us. What is the plea and argument for it? God will *remember his holy covenant, the oath which he hath sworn*, whereby it is established; and hence he will establish us, that we may *serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life.* A great argument! that those we plead for are God's covenant people. *Lord, feed thy people*, those that are thine by election, by acquisition and purchase, and those that are thine by covenant, a people that have made a covenant with thee.

2. The next argument is, because they are *the flock of thine heritage*. There are two things in this argument that we may plead with God. (1.) That they are a flock. (2.) That they are *the flock of God's heritage*.

(1.) They are a flock; that is, of sheep, wherein these three things are comprized, which are pleadable with God. [1.] That they are helpless. [2.] Harmless. [3.] Useful. A flock of sheep is so.

[1.] They are helpless. Sheep are poor, helpless creatures; the more of them there are, the more are they expos'd unto all manner of rapine, and destruction, when left unto themselves. They are poor, helpless creatures. And truly so are the people of God, unless Christ their shepherd be with them. They are and have been a poor, helpless people throughout the whole world. I confess when Christ their shepherd goes before them, they will go through great difficulties; but of themselves they are altogether helpless.

[2.] They are harmless. So are sheep; and it is required of all the saints of God, that they be so likewise. *Phil. ii. 15. Be harmless in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.* Let us do the world no harm, neither publick nor private; do them no wrong, nor injury, that we may have an argument from hence to plead with God.

[3.] Sheep are useful; and I will name three things (though I love not to pursue allegories) wherein the people of God are useful in the world. 1.) In the secret blessing that goes along with them. 2.) In the good example they give. 3.) In their industry in the world.

1.) There is a secret blessing goes along with them; as you see here, *chap. v. ver. 7.* of this prophecy, *The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst [or in the bowels] of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.* This poor remnant of Jacob that lies in the bowels of the people, communicates secret blessings to them; this remnant is as the dew that makes them spring; all they have is from this remnant of Jacob in their bowels. But who sees it? No, saith he, it is not such a dew; it *tarrieth not for man*; none see the secret way whereby the dew falls; nor those secret ways whereby blessings are communicated to the whole nation from this secret remnant of Jacob, that lies in the bowels of them.

2.) They are useful from the good example they give; walking in the world as becomes creatures made to the glory of God. *Tit. iii. 8. This is a faithful saying, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works: these things are good and profitable unto men.* Not only unto them who are relieved by them, but unto all mankind it is profitable. When professors are diligent and fruitful in good works, all mankind is profited by their example.

3.) They are profitable and useful in the world by their industry in it. *Tit. iii. 14. Let ours also learn to maintain good works, to profess honest trades, for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful:* useful to the world by their industry in their honest trades; the words may be well rendred so, and it is so in the margin of your Bibles. Many others help only to consume the fruits of the earth in luxury and wantonness; but God gives these an industry in their honest callings. Here is argument in this, that this flock is helpless, harmless, fruitful, useful. But

(2.) The main of this argument lies upon the adjunct. Saith he, *Feed the flock of thine heritage.* This flock is God's heritage. *Deut. xxxii. 9. The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* Why the lot of his inheritance? When the people came to possess the land, it was divided to them all by lot. God hath his lot in the world. That which, if I may so say, is fallen to God's share, is this flock; and Christ rejoices in it, *Psal. xvi. 5, 6. The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage.* His lot was cast in Canaan, in a good and fruitful place. Christ takes a view of his Church, and is satisfied with it. I desire no more, saith he, *The lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place, this my lot is a goodly heritage.*

And these things may be pleaded from this, that they are *the flock of God's heritage.*

[1.] It being God's heritage, if he take not care of it, no body else will. Every man takes care of his own heritage, that which belongs to him; and if God take not care of his, there is none else to care for them. It is frequently so expressed, that they are such as none care for. Why? It is not their heritage. It is not the heritage of princes, and great men of the world; of the *Turk*, or the *Pope*. As therefore it is God's heritage, if he will not take care of it, it is in vain to expect it from any other.

[2.] It is the heritage of him whom the whole world looks upon to be their greatest enemy. The whole world is at enmity against God: and you see the state of things in the world; every one's design is to destroy the heritage of his enemy. As long as the world continues in this enmity against God, its whole design is to destroy his heritage. Look upon the nations abroad in all their agitations, their main design is to ruin this heritage, because it is God's, against whom they maintain enmity in their hearts, worship, and ways. If therefore God doth not take care of his own heritage, it will certainly be destroy'd, because his.

[3.] This argument may also be pleaded: If this flock be the lot of God's heritage, then take it away, and the whole world is hell. If God's lot be out, if this remnant be destroyed, let men make things as fine as they will, adorn their dungeons as much as they please, it is all but hell.

These are the arguments that may be pleaded with God from this: *Feed thy people, and the flock of thy heritage.* It is a poor, helpless, harmless flock, yet useful to

the glory of God, and the good of men. It is God's heritage, if he minds it not, none will; and if it be taken out of the earth, it will presently become a hell. This is the second argument in the text for faith to plead with God.

3. The third argument is taken from their state and condition: That they *dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel*. The first argument pleads God's glory, his love, and faithfulness: *Thy people in covenant*. The second argument pleads God's interest: *The flock of thy heritage*. This third argument pleads God's pity and compassion; *Which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel*. Every word hath argument in it to plead with God in this case.

(1.) They *dwell solitarily*; that is, disconsolately. It is a poor disconsolate flock, that dwells separate from relief. This takes in two things: Inward disconsolation from themselves, and their own fears and distresses; and outward helplessness. They are where none comes at them to relieve them. It is a great plea, the solitariness of God's flock, with the compassion and mercy of God for their relief. It may be, through our peace and plenty, and such things as we enjoy, we are not so sensible of the efficacy of this argument; but the Lord knows, and many of his understand, how strong a plea it is with God upon that account: we are a poor solitary people, comfortless within, and helpless without.

(2.) As they *dwell solitarily*; so *in the wood*; that is, in a dark and entangled condition. They are not only solitary, disconsolate, and helpless; but they are in the dark, see not their way, and so in danger to wander; and if they are out of the certain path, the wild beasts of the forest are ready to devour them. There is nothing harder with the people of God at this day, than that they are in the wood, where it is difficult to find their way. The Lord make them careful, and to see the steps of their shepherd going before them, that they may not wander, and so be exposed to the wild beasts that are ready to devour them.

(3.) Another plea is from the place where this wood is: It is *in the midst of Carmel*. Though there was a particular place so called, yet the word is a common name for a fruitful field for feeding: the country or nation where they lived was such. Some think this hath relation to *Babylon*, which was very fruitful unto the inhabitants of it; yet the poor remnant dwelt in the wood in the midst of *Carmel*. The *Jews* did so. *Nehemiah* gives us a most pathetic description of their state, *chap. ix. 36, 37*. *Behold we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold we are servants in it. And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us, because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress*. This people *dwelt in the wood, in the midst of Carmel*, a land good and pleasant, yet they were in a distressed condition.

(4.) There is yet another plea in it for mercy: that they are not only solitary for a little season, entred into the wood; but they *dwell* in this solitary condition, have been long in it, and may continue long so: it signifies an abiding or continuing in that state. This argument as I told you respects the pity, the bowels of God, his compassion and tenderness, when his poor people shall dwell and abide long solitary, in an entangled, perplex'd condition, as in a wood, in the midst of a fruitful land, that God had given their fathers. It is so at this day with many of God's people; and it is a great plea for mercy and compassion.

4. There is one argument more in the words, which I shall but name, and I have done. *Let them feed*, saith he, *in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old*. *Bashan* and *Gilead* were places of very fruitful pasture. Whence the children of *Reuben* and *Gad* desired *Moses*, that they might have their possession in *Gilead*, and in the kingdom of *Bashan*; *because*, say they, *it is a place for cattle, and thy servants have much cattle*. It was a fruitful place where their flocks were well fed and nourished.

Where lies the argument here? It is fetched from former experiences of what God had done. It is from God's faithfulness grounded upon former experience. We have seen what God can do, how he hath brought his people out of straits, and carried them through difficulties, and delivered them out of troubles, and fed them in *Bashan*, and in the land of *Gilead*: which is made an argument, that he would feed them so again.

I might,

I might press this argument farther; but I shall offer nothing more at present; and I think what I have said is not unseasonable. We have seen the state of things laid before us, that we have a rule of faith what to pray for in such a day, that God would feed his people. We have shewed you what is contained therein, and have gone over briefly those arguments that may be pleaded with God in such a case, reserving the time and season unto his own sovereignty.

* S E R M O N XIX.

The Beauty and Strength of Zion.

PSAL. xlviii. 12, 13, 14.

Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.

MANY expositors think this Psalm to be an *ἵμνος*, a triumphant song of thanksgiving after some great deliverance at Jerusalem. Some apply it to the times of Asa, when Zerah and the Ethiopians came with an army against Jerusalem of ten hundred thousand men. Others apply it to the times of Jehoshaphat, when the Moabites, and Amonites, and mount Seir the Edomites, were gathered together against Judah. And others again to the days of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib and his army came against Jerusalem and were destroyed. They ground their interpretation upon ver. 4, 5, and 6. *Lo the kings were assembled, they passed by together. They saw it, (but they could come no farther) and so they marvelled, they were troubled, and hasted away: fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail:* which is a description of some great consternation that befel the enemies of God, and the enemies of Jerusalem, when they drew near unto it. So the Jews do interpret these verses: *Walk about Zion, and go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces:* that notwithstanding this great and dreadful attempt, whether by the Ethiopians, or by the Moabites, or Sennacherib, there is not one tower broken down of Zion or of Jerusalem, but all things are safe and well. For my own part, I should rather judge this Psalm to be composed by David, and purely mystical and prophetic. It is easy to manifest that all the foregoing Psalms are so. And the close of the former Psalm is the calling of the Gentiles, where he saith: *God reigneth over the heathen:* God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness, ver. 8. And in ver. 9. you read in the margin of your Bibles, better than in the text: *The voluntary of the people are gathered unto the people of the God of Abraham.* The people were become a willing people in the day of his power. However, all conclude that these words are a graphical description of the defence that God will at all times give his Church, which the Psalmist doth set before our eyes.

* This Sermon was preached April 22, 1675.

Look upon it, and observe what a diligent view he requires to be taken of what he here proposes. He looks upon *Zion* as a well fortified garrison, not like to be carried in haste by the enemy. And he would have you well consider too, what the fortifications are; therefore he distributes his direction into so many particulars. *Walk about Zion*, this is the way whereby you may come to see how *Zion* is fortified. It may be you have gone a little way in walking, and have seen much, but do not cease: *Go round about her*, see if you can find one weak place, where she is likely to be attack'd by the enemy: *Tell the towers*, cast up the number of them, and see that they are not few; which is what a man of judgment and understanding would do, if he were to take a view of a fortified place, and consider whether it would hold out against a strong enemy: *Mark ye well her bulwarks*: or, *set your heart to her bulwarks*, consider them, don't take a general view of these fortifications of *Zion*, but ponder and consider, whether they are likely to hold out or not, and whether you may put your trust in them: *Consider her palaces*, which were the great and eminent buildings in and about *Zion*, called in some place, *palaces of ivory*, with which they were greatly adorned. So that here is this direction given to take a very strict, sedate, considerate view of the fortifications of *Zion*; since it would certainly be attack'd by great and powerful enemies. There are two things added. One is the particular end wherefore they should do so: *That ye may tell it to the generation following*, since other ages of the Church would have the use of it. The other is the ground why all this would be of benefit to them, and the generations following: *For this God is our God in covenant, and that for ever and ever, and will be our guide unto death.*

I shall make one *Observation* from the words, and speak a little very briefly and plainly to it.

Obf. A diligent search into, and consideration of the means and causes of the preservation and protection of the Church in the greatest dangers and difficulties, is a duty incumbent on us for our own support against sinful fears, and to enable us to that testimony which is required for future generations, to encourage them to trust in the Lord.

Every age is to give over a good testimony of God's dealing with *Zion* to the age that comes after. And a diligent search and enquiry into the causes and means of the protection and preservation of the Church of God in the midst of eminent dangers and difficulties, is a duty incumbent upon us, that we may be fortified against sinful fears in ourselves, and encourage succeeding generations to trust in the Lord. As we have received the testimony of such who have gone before us, so we are to give our testimony to those who shall come after.

All that I shall do at present is to answer these five questions,

I. What is to be understood by the preservation and protection of the Church, so as we may look neither for less nor more than what we are like to meet with?

II. What is meant by searching into, and considering of these causes and means of the Churches preservation? *Walk about Zion, tell her towers, set your heart to her bulwarks, consider her palaces, &c.*

III. What are those causes and means of the Churches preservation, those towers and bulwarks which will not fail, whenever *Zerah* or *Sennacherib* comes, or whatever attempts are made upon *Zion*?

IV. What reason is there why we should thus search into, and consider these causes of the Churches preservation and protection?

V. What is the testimony which we have to give concerning this matter to the ensuing generation? *That ye may declare it to the generation to come.*

I shall speak a little in answer to these five enquiries.

I. What is that preservation and protection of *Zion*, the Church of God, that we may expect, whose causes and means we should enquire into?

This may be reduced unto three heads,

1. The eternal salvation of the Church of God. This is the goal and the prize that all this great running is about in the world. Satan is in his own nature as active and restless, as he is malicious; and yet, I suppose, if this end was taken away, if this was not in his eye, the eternal salvation of the Church, of all that believe, he would give himself

himself much more leisure than he doth. All things here, evils, trials, persecutions, and the like, are but skirmishes; but where goes eternal bliss, there goes the victory. This therefore is part of that preservation and safety of *Zion* which we are to look after; namely, as the Apostle saith, *That all Israel shall be saved.* You have a great security that our Lord Jesus Christ gives of it, *John x. 27, &c. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. I and my Father are one.*

This is the first thing in the Church's preservation, namely, that let the conflict be never so great, never so severe, all true believers shall be eternally saved. And if we do not lay the principal weight in our thoughts, upon this, our concern in other things will be of no moment unto us. There is one false opinion doth more mischief to the honour of God in the world in this matter, than all the Devils in hell are able to do; and that is, of the total and final apostasy of true believers; for if that be so, we have lost our very first principle of the preservation of *Zion*, namely, that *all Israel shall be saved*, and that none shall take believers out of the hands of Christ.

2. There is this in it also, that there shall be a Church, a professing Church preserved in the world throughout all generations, in despite of all the oppositions of Satan and the world; that is, there shall be a called number yielding obedience internally unto Christ, and openly professing that obedience always preserved unto the end of the world. It is expressly included in that promise, *Isa. ix. 7. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth and for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.* However it may fall out in particular places and nations, yet *Zion* will be preserved, God will reserve for Jesus Christ a Church visibly professing, and yielding obedience unto him according to the Gospel.

But you will say perhaps: Where was there such a Church in the time of the antichristian apostasy? Did not the visible Church wholly fail?

I answer: Though I acknowledge all the Churches in the world have greatly apostatized and fallen away; yet in the first place, all did not fall away in the same length or manner with those in these parts of the world, that were under the antichristian apostasy. There were Churches in the East, which though very corrupt formerly, and now more so, yet might justly be esteemed a visible Church. Besides the Church of God was then in *Babylon*, until the reformation. There was in the *Roman Church* a number of persons that sincerely feared God, and belonged unto the *Zion* of Christ, who were preserved. Hence is that call, *Rev. xviii. 4. Come out of her, my people.* Christ's people was in her until the time that God gave them a call to come out of her. And another part of them were in visible opposition all along to the growing apostasy of the papacy. About four or five hundred years after Christ, the great composition was made between Christianity and Paganism, when the outward court was given to the Gentiles to be trodden down; that is plainly, when these northern nations that divided and destroyed the *Roman empire*, were brought in to be Christians. And upon that composition, nations came in to a profession of Christianity with pagan worship and manners; but yielded obedience unto christian rulers, bishops, priests, and the like. Now from that very time, when all things sunk into antichristianism, there was still a visible testimony given against it by the Church of Christ; that is, by believers from one generation to another, an eminent, blessed testimony against all that cursed apostasy.

It is good to keep our faith and expectation within bounds, that we do not look for more than is like to come to pass; and yet still to have our faith confirmed in those things that may be sure not to fail. *All Israel shall be saved*, and Christ will maintain his kingdom in the world against all opposition; that the cause wherein we are engaged, whatsoever becomes of our persons, will be triumphant. Believers shall be saved, and a professing Church shall be preserved, which is all the general cause wherein we are engaged. And God it may be hath placed us in this age to give over our testimony to the future generation.

3. There belongs to the preservation of the Church, the protection and deliverance of the true Church of God under persecution: this likewise comes within the compass of these fortifications. We are very apt to look after our own concerns,

and it may be to imagine we are more concerned in this third head, than in both the former. But those that think so, make a very wrong judgment; for the measure of all our concerns in present deliverance, or in the conflicts of the Church, is to be taken from those two generals, The eternal salvation of the Church at last, and the preservation of the kingdom of Christ in the world. And if once we begin to measure them by our own advantages, peace, liberty, or friends, we shall take wrong measures of God's providence, and our own expectation.

There are three seasons, or three ways, whereby Churches in particular times and places are in danger of coming short of this protection, or seeming so to do. (1.) When the power of Satan and the world are set upon them in a way of persecution. (2.) When the nations of the world, among whom they live, are so wicked, that God will not forbear a general devastation and destruction. (3.) When themselves apostatize and decay, and provoke God to remove his candlestick from among them. In such seasons it comes to a trial, whether particular Churches, or a Church in any particular place, shall be preserved and protected in their present trial, or not. And I confess unto you that my thoughts are, that all three are upon us at present, which makes our case the more difficult and hard to be determined. But this, I bless God, I can't but think, that what we most fear, is least to be feared. It is plain, we most fear the first; and I think I am certain, that the first is least to be feared. I shall speak briefly to each of them.

(1.) As to the first there are two rules whereby to make a judgment of the preservation of the Church in time of persecution. The one is that given by the prophet *Hosea*, chap. xi. 12. *Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.* He prophesies the immediate destruction of *Ephraim*: the Church of *Israel* shall wander to *Assyria*, but *Judah* shall yet abide. Why? *Judah yet ruleth with God*; that is, for God; the ruling power of *Judah* is for God. I take that to be the meaning of the words: for if you will observe concerning *Judah*, all that ever were good among them, was in the ruling power. In the very days of *Josiah* himself, *Judah*, that is, the body of the people, turn'd to God feignedly, and not with their whole heart, *Jer.* iii. 10. But yet the prophet foresaw a time would come, that *Judah* should not be so: he shall rule therefore while he is faithful to God. Here then is your rule: while the ruling power of a Church, or nation is for God, is faithful to God, and his interest, walking with him, they are within these bulwarks. And truly, to speak what I believe in this matter, (for in all things that are future, that we may not have clear and full evidence of, there is a reserve for sovereignty) wherever there are Churches walking with God, ruling for God, and faithful to him, they shall never be prevailed against by outward persecution in any place, unless it be in subserviency to the hidden design of sovereign wisdom, to remove the Gospel wholly from such a place. This then is the second rule, and we can never fathom, and so must be in the dark, whether the Church in this or that particular place shall be absolutely preserved; because if God pleases, he can make the total scattering to be a means subservient to the spreading of the Gospel. But so far as they walk with God, they are within this protection.

(2.) The Churches danger lies in the destruction that may come upon places where they are, for national sins. There were in the days of *Jehoiakim* and *Zedekiah*, good figs at *Jerusalem*, very good figs, even as the first ripe figs, *Jer.* xxiv. 2. that is, there were many precious saints of God: and there were also evil figs, so evil that none could eat them: and yet God puts all these figs into a basket, good and bad, and all must go into captivity. He could no longer forbear for the provoking sins of the nation, the whole must go into captivity together. Now if such a season may come upon any place, as hath upon many nations deservedly because of national sins, the good may suffer with the bad, and Churches may receive a scattering.

(3.) The third danger is their own apostasy. There is not any thing in the world that we ought to be more afraid of than of a Church's scattering in an apostatizing condition. Then we shall bear the burden of our guilt in our scattering, and be clean taken off from all means of retrieving it. But there is an interest of all particular Churches walking with God in this preservation and protection that is here promised and described to be round about *Zion*; and it is an act of mere sovereignty where

where God dealeth otherwise with them. That is the preservation and protection of the Church in answer to the first enquiry.

II. The second question is: What is it to search after, and consider the causes and means of this preservation? Where shall we look for it?

To this I answer:

1. Be sure to take off your search and consideration from those things which are not, and will not prove to be the bulwarks of *Zion*. You know how they were blamed in such a case, *Isa. xxii.* in a time of great distress and invasion that was coming upon them. The prophet tells you what the people did, *ver. 8, &c. He discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest. Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many; and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool. And ye have numbred the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall. Ye made also a ditch between the two walls, for the water of the old pool; but ye have not looked unto the Maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.* Looking unto carnal aids and helps in straits and difficulties hath been our folly. The first thing in this call, to look to *Zion*, is to *cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils: for whereof is he to be accounted?*

2. Where shall we look for these bulwarks? We must look for the protection of the Church, where we look for the destruction of its adversaries. And where shall we look for that? The prophet tells us, *Isa. xxxiv. 16. Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.* All the foregoing prophecy is concerning the utter destruction of *Idumea* in the type, but of *Babylon, Rome*, antichrist in the antitype. And the verses from 11. to 16. express the gathering of all the fowls of prey, dismal fowls, to dwell in the place. But how shall we know whether this will come to pass? Says the prophet: *Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read; no one of these shall fail:* that is, no one particular judgment that God hath threatned in his whole book against his adversaries, shall ever fail, no not in one circumstance: neither the *Cormorant*, nor the *Screechowl* shall want her mate. Seek it out of the book of the Lord; you will find it recorded in these prophecies, and nothing shall fail there; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and the spirit of the Lord shall accomplish it. We are to look therefore and search for these defences, causes, and means of the protection of *Zion*, in the book of the Lord. This is *the tower of David, where hangs a thousand shields, all shields of mighty men*, *Cant. iv. 4*; where is recorded all the defence of the Church and people of God. It is your duty to search in the book of God, and read, to see what are the causes and means of the protection and preservation of the Church; and when you have found them out, you are then to consider them. Want of consideration weakens our faith greatly. If you can find by reading in the book of God, that there are such and such defences and bulwarks of *Zion*; our duty is now to consider whether they will hold out against the greatest attacks and attempts of Satan and all our adversaries. I speak what is plain, but very fit for this day. When you have found out these defences, bring them to the shield of faith, and obedience to God, and consider whether they are like to hold out; consider each, and give judgment upon them. And if you judge they are so, then trust to them; drive all you have, all your concerns within the compass of these fortifications, and trust to them. And this may suffice in answer to the second question; Where are we to search for the preservation and protection of the Church?

III. What are the causes and means of the preservation of *Zion*, and protection of the Church, that we are to search out, and to consider and trust unto?

It is but a little I can comply with the text in, I cannot go round about *Zion*, I cannot tell her towers; but we will consider some of her bulwarks, that will be a sure preservation against all opposition. And I will name four or five unto you.

1. The designation and constitution of Jesus Christ to be King of the Church, King of *Zion*, is the great bulwark of *Zion*. This is the fort-royal that never fails. *Psal. ii. Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying; Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have*

have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. Notwithstanding all this tumult, conspiracy, and rage, all these counsels and advices, yet, saith he, *Zion* must stand; for I have set my King, I have anointed Christ my eternal Son to be King upon my holy hill of *Zion*. But though Christ be made King, it doth not follow but he may give over reigning, and so there will be no security from hence. The truth is, he will do so, he will give over reigning as to his mediatory kingdom; but not before he hath done with all his enemies: *Psal. cx. 1. Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.* And the Apostle. *1 Cor. xv. saith, he must reign until all his enemies be subdued.* And when he shall have put down all power and authority, then he shall give up the kingdom. The great security of the Church is from hence, that Christ is made King of *Zion*; and if he be a King he must have subjects. The word is his law, he rules by his spirit; but rule and law together will not make a kingdom, unless there be subjects to yield obedience. If Christ be a King, if he sit upon *Zion*, the Church must be preserved, for he must have a kingdom. There is but one way in the world that looks probable to put an end to Christ's reign, and that is to cease being his enemies; for the express terms of his reign is, *till all his enemies be made his footstool.* How easy were it for me to dwell upon this, That this King of the Church hath power to preserve it to all ends, and in all circumstances; power to preserve it to eternal salvation, in visible profession, or in particular trials. And what king is there among men that will not preserve his subjects in time of trial, when it is in his power so to do? The Lord Christ will preserve them. I give unto them eternal life, and no man shall take them out of my hands. He is able to save them to the utmost, even all that come unto God by him; and he is given to be head over all things to the Church, to dispose of all as seems good unto him, for the end, use, and interest of the Church.

This is the first bulwark and security we have for the preservation and protection of the Church; and unless men can dethrone Jesus Christ, and cast him off from being King upon the holy hill of *Zion*, it is in vain to think of prevailing against *Zion*.

2. The second bulwark of *Zion* is the promises of God, which are innumerable. I will name but two of them: One is the foundation of the Old Testament, and the other of the New. One held it out for four thousand years, and was never impeached; and the other for these sixteen hundred years, and shall never be shaken.

The promise that was the foundation of the Old Testament, was the first promise of God, *Gen. iii. 15. I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* There are these four things in that promise. (1.) That there shall always be a twofold seed in the world, the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman; they shall never fail while this world stands. (2.) That these two seeds shall always be at enmity; there shall be an everlasting conflict, from the entrance of sin to the end of it. *I will put enmity*, saith God, and such an enmity as shall be carried on by the highest and most severe warfare. The enmity is spiritual, but the warfare oftentimes is outward. The first manifestation of this enmity was in blood: *Cain* slew *Abel*. Why? Because he was of the evil one. And so it hath been carried on by blood from that day to this. (3.) That either seed hath a leader; there is *he* and *thou*, *it* and *thou*; that is, *Christ* and *Satan*: Christ is the leader of the seed of the woman, the captain and head of it in this great conflict; and Satan as he was the head of the apostasy from God, continues the head of his seed, the generation of vipers, to try out the contest with Christ unto the end. (4.) The victory shall always be to the seed of the woman. It is said indeed: *Thou shalt bruise his heel.* Christ's heel, in his sufferings, both in his own person, and those of the Church. But on the contrary 'tis said likewise, *He shall bruise thy head*; break thy power and strength; conquer thee. Then *Zion* is safe. This was the foundation of the Old Testament: and tho' things oftentimes were brought to great distress, sometimes by apostasy, and sometimes by persecution; yet this promise carried it, and delivered over the Church safe into the hand of Christ.

Now when Christ takes the Church, and goes to new form it, and fashion it more for the glory of God, there is the foundation promise made in the New Testament: *Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*, *Matth. xvi. 18.* If that obscure promise under the Old Testament did secure *Zion*

as to all those things before mentioned, four thousand years; shall not we trust to this promise of our Saviour for half the time? Tho' it is indeed the continuance of the same promise; for the *gates of hell* is the *seed of the serpent*, and the *rock* is *Christ*. That is the second bulwark of *Zion*. We may be shaken in our faith and confidence, but we have the promise of God, that hath supported it thus far in the world, and will certainly preserve it to the end.

3. There is the watchful providence of God over the Church. It is express'd, *Deut. xi. 12.* where the land of the Church is said to be a *land, which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year unto the end of it.* That land which is the possession of the Church, the seat of God's worship, the Church itself, is what the Lord careth for. And 'tis express'd again to the same purpose, *Isa. xxvii. 3.* where this land is called God's *vineyard: I the Lord do keep it, and will water it every moment, lest any hurt it; I will keep it night and day.* There is the watchful providence of God over the Church night and day preserving it, which providence indeed we live upon, though it is secret and invisible to us. There is power in it, but *God hides his power.* We see little, we are not able to discern any thing to purpose of the secret emanation of divine power and wisdom through the hearts and counsels of all mankind, to this end that God may preserve his Church, governing their affections, ruling their thoughts, turning and overturning their counsels, things that will never appear nor come to light, what was their occasion and ends, till the great day, when the thoughts of all hearts shall be discovered. The Lord will keep and preserve his Church that none may hurt it.

4. Another bulwark is God's special presence. God is in an especial manner present in his Church. I have treated concerning the nature and special presence of God and Christ in the Church, and proved it from many promises, and shewed the effect of it, which I shall not now insist upon, but only shew that this is a bulwark of the Church. In *Isa. viii. 9, 10,* there is a gantlet thrown out to all the adversaries of the people of God, and a challenge to do their worst: *Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear all ye of far countries: gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces; take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand:* What is the reason? *For God is with us.* The presence of God is with his Church. Every thing of force, of counsel, of association, and agreement, all shall be broken and come to nought, they shall have no effect; and he gives this only reason: *Because God is with us.* While God is with his Church, it may be exercised with great trials, so that they may think they have lost the presence of God, as in *Judg. vi. 12.* *The angel of the Lord appear'd to Gideon, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee.* Oh my Lord, saith he, *if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?* Whence is all this evil come upon us, that we should be under the power of the *Midianites*, oppressed and destroyed by them? He could not believe that if God was with them according to his promise, they could be so prevailed upon by their enemies. Great things of trouble may befall the Church of God, while God is present with them, so as they may be ready to say sometimes: *My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God, the Lord hath forsaken, my God hath forgotten me.* It cannot be, saith *Gideon*, that God is with us, if we be thus ruined. But he will appear, and manifest himself for the protection of *Zion*.

5. The last bulwark, unto which all others may be reduced, is the covenant of God: *For this God is our God.* That God who hath fortified *Zion* in all other Generations, and wrought these deliverances, he is our God in covenant.

I shall not need to reckon any more than these five bulwarks of the Church. Ponder and consider whether they are like to work out its preservation and protection. And if God gives us wisdom to single out these things, and consider them aright, we shall soon see what encouragement we have to pray for the preservation and protection of the Church, however it may be attack'd and attempted, even this day, which is our present business.

IV. Why should we make this enquiry into these causes and means of the preservation and protection of the Church?

The reason is, to deliver ourselves from our own sinful fears, and that by a discovery of the great mistake which all the adversaries of the Church run upon. The

reason why, the ground whereupon they attempt the Church, is that and no other which you have, *Ezek. xxxviii. 10, 11. Thus saith the Lord God, It shall come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought; and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages, I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates.* Here is the very ground of the undertaking of the world against the Church in any age, that they have no defence, are a poor people, that dwell in unwalled villages, and have neither bars nor gates. It is a miserable disappointment for men to go and undertake to destroy, or oppress any place, thinking they are unprovided, and when they come there, to find it quite otherwise. At this day there would not any move a tongue against the people of God, but upon this very account, that they have no defence, no protection. And sometimes they proceed so far as that they begin to discover the bulwarks of *Zion*, if not in the causes, yet in the effects. The old world saw not God in the cause of what he did; but when the waters began to roul upon them, the Psalmist tells us, *they saw it, and were afraid, and fearfulness took hold upon them.* Is this the people that dwell in unwalled villages, that have neither bars nor gates? See their towers, behold their bulwarks; there is no attacking them. When once God makes them to see this, that the power of Christ is engaged for his people, they will then cry to the mountains and to the rocks to hide them from the day of his wrath; they will be surprized with fear.

Now seeing the adversaries of the Church of God are certainly upon this mistake attempting the Church, because, as they imagine, it hath no guard, and they will certainly find at last, that they have a guard which they saw not, and were not acquainted with; why should we be afraid in such a case? Nothing more encourages persons, than when they know their enemies do clearly mistake their condition. This is enough to make the veriest coward in the world valiant. Let us be sure to be found within this garrison, and place of defence, and certain that we have to do in the concerns of *Zion*, and not of the world; and then shall we see the mountains all full of chariots and horses of fire round about us, Christ reigning, the promise of Christ engaged, and the watchful eye of God open upon the Church continually. Our fears arise from the want of considering these things, and taking a carnal view and measure of things that are seen.

V. The last enquiry is, What testimony are we to give over to the generation that is to come after us?

This testimony consists of two things:

1. The exercise of faith and patience in all our own trials that may befall us, that there may be a remembrance of it in the generations that are to come. The martyrs that suffered here so long ago, do still tell us in this generation by their faith and patience, that *Zion* had walls and bulwarks round about her, and that God was her God and guide. Had they not believed it, do you think they would have given up their bodies to the flames in this city and other parts of the nation? In like manner that faith and patience which we shall exercise in any trial that may befall us in the behalf of *Zion*, is to tell the generations to come what God hath done, and how we have found it ourselves.

2. It is our duty to give it over by instruction to those that we bring up. Our fathers have told us what God did in their days; and we are to give in this testimony to God, to tell our children what God hath done in our days: so long have we lived and been professors; so long have we walked in *Zion*, and we have found God faithful in his promise. Not one word or tittle hath failed, that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. Thus are we to instruct the generation that is growing up, that hath not seen those things which we have seen.

* S E R M O N XX.

The Divine Power of the Gospel.

ROM. i. 16.

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

THE preceding *verses* of this *chapter* contain a declaration of the person who wrote this *epistle*; the apostolical authority wherewith it was wrote; and a gracious salutation of them to whom it was wrote. This *verse* makes an entrance upon the main subject matter designed to be treated on in the whole *epistle*. So that it is the center of this glorious part of the Scripture, wherein the first general part of it doth issue, and whereon the remaining part depends.

The Church at *Rome* was planted some while before; but it is altogether uncertain by whom. The wisdom of God foreseeing what abuses would be made of the foundation of that Church, hath hid it quite from us; there is nothing in Scripture, nothing in antiquity to intimate by whom the faith was there first preached. Probably it was by some believers of the circumcision, whence those disputes arose, and contentions about the observation of *Judaical* ceremonies, which the Apostle handles and determines, *chap.* xiv. and xv. of this *epistle*. Hearing of their faith, our Apostle, upon whom, as he saith, *was the care of all the Churches*, and to whom *the ministry of the uncircumcision* was in an especial manner committed, Gal. ii. 7, 8. writes this *epistle* to them, to instruct them in the mystery of the Gospel, and confirm them in the faith thereof, and in the worship of God required therein.

To give weight to what he wrote, and commend it to their consideration, he acquaints them with that love and care he had for them, answerable to his duty from whence it did proceed; telling them, *ver.* 14, 15. that *he was debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise; so that as much as in him was, he was ready to preach the Gospel to them that were at Rome also.* And hereby he prevented a prejudice and jealousy that might possess their minds, and answers an objection they might make to him about his writing. For they might say in themselves, What makes him a stranger, at so great a distance, interpose in our concerns? Doth he not *stretch himself beyond his measure, or boast himself in another man's line*, which he affirms in another place he did not? for he was charged with such things. His zeal carrying him out to act for the Gospel in a peculiar manner, he was charged to *exceed his measure, and boast in another man's line*. To obviate this, he tells them, no; I do nothing but what becomes an honest man, discharging a debt the Lord Jesus Christ hath laid upon me by virtue of my call to my office, and my susception of it. *I am debtor to the Greek, and to the barbarian; to the wise, and to the unwise.* I am called, saith he, to preach the Gospel to all

* This Sermon was preached May 19, 1670.

sorts of people under heaven: my commission is to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, Mark xvi. 15; that is, as expounded, *Matth. xxviii. 19. to all nations*, persons of all nations as I have opportunity. Our Lord Jesus Christ out of his love and care unto them whom he had redeemed with his blood, that they might be saved, had given the Apostles to be theirs: *All things are yours; Paul is yours, Apollos is yours*; and charged them to preach the Gospel to them: so that *Acts xx. 26, 27.* he saith, Now *I am free from the blood of all men.* How doth he prove it? *I have not shunned to declare to them the whole counsel of God.* He frees himself from any surmise that they might have, that he had a design of his own, and sought some advantage to himself in thus interposing in the concerns of the Gospel, by telling them he doth but discharge a debt; *I am a debtor*, saith he. And it is truly and really the wisdom of those who in their several spheres have the dispensation of the Gospel committed unto them, to let the people know, that they need not absolutely, whatsoever they do consequentially, count themselves beholden to them for preaching the word; but that indeed our Lord Jesus Christ hath engaged us in a debt, which if, in his name, we pay and discharge, we are sure of a reward; if not, he will require it at our hands. We owe the preaching of the Gospel to them that are willing to hear it; and if upon any account we withhold it from them, we do defraud them. *I am debtor*, saith the Apostle. And every one that hath received the gift and call from Christ is a debtor, and so should esteem himself. I have done nothing, saith he, but engaged in the discharge of the debt which I owe to the souls of men.

But there might likewise arise another objection: if he be so concerned in the publication of the Gospel, that he writes an *epistle to Rome*, the greatest theater then upon the earth, the head of the empire, and most eminent place in the world; Why did he not come himself and preach it? He returns an answer thereunto, *ver. 15.* That, saith he, is not at present in my power; I am not my own, I am disposed of by a call of Christ, and guidance of his spirit; but, *I am ready to come to Rome*, I have a readiness to preach the Gospel wheresoever God calls me.

Now that he might not seem to have outbid himself in speaking of going thither to preach the Gospel, without considering what it might cost him, he gives them the reason and ground upon which he had so engaged himself to be ready to come to Rome, in the words of the text: *For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

In the words there are,

First, A general assertion laid down as the ground of what he had before affirmed, and that is in these words: *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.*

Secondly, He gives a reason of that assertion, what made him say so: *I am not ashamed, because the Gospel is the power of God*: to which reason he gives a threefold limitation: *First*, as to the especial end of it: *The power of God.* Whereunto? For this or that end in the world? No: *It is the power of God for salvation.* *Secondly*, he limits it in respect of the object: *The power of God unto salvation.* To all? No, but *to every one that believeth*; to all believers, consider them either antecedently to their being made believers, or consequentially having received the word. To others it is *foolishness*; but to us that believe it is *the power, and the wisdom of God.* *Thirdly*, it hath limits as to the manner of administration: *To the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* The word *first* there respects the order of dispensation, and not a priority of efficacy, or excellency. The word was first to be preached to the *Jews*, as you know, in many places, and that for many ends, not now to be insisted on. This is the design of the words.

I shall for the opening of them enquire into two things: 1. What is intended by the Gospel? 2. What is it to be ashamed of the Gospel? After which the great reason will ensue of the Apostle's assertion: *Because it is the power of God unto salvation.*

1. What is intended by the Gospel? The Gospel is taken two ways. (1.) Absolutely, as it is in itself. (2.) Relatively, with reference unto our practice and observance of it.

(1.) Absolutely, and in itself: and so also it is taken two ways:

[1.] Strictly,

[1.] Strictly, according to the signification of the word, *good tidings* for the good tidings of the accomplishment of the promise by the sending of Jesus Christ. The name is taken from *Isa. lii. 7. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that publisheth the good tidings of the Gospel.* And in this sense the Apostle gives us a description of the Gospel, *Acts xiii. 32, 33. We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again:* sent Christ according to the promise, the tidings of which is strictly the Gospel.

[2.] The Gospel is taken more largely for all things that were annexed to the accomplishment of the promise, the revelation of truths made there, with all the institutions and ordinances of worship that accompanied it: the whole doctrine and worship of the Gospel. The first is what God doth for us in giving Christ; the second is what God requireth of us in faith and obedience, and in the whole worship of the Gospel. And this is the common sense wherein this word *Gospel* is taken.

(2.) The Gospel may be considered relatively, with reference unto believers: and then it intends our profession of the Gospel; which profession consists in the performance of all Gospel duties, when and as they are to be perform'd by virtue of the command of Christ, which I would desire you to consider and remember; for I can assure you all your concerns in the Gospel will be found to depend upon it.

It is in reference unto the Gospel in both these senses that the Apostle here speaks; as it contains the promise of Christ, the doctrine of the Gospel, the worship of God, the institutions therein, and every man's performance of his own duty, according to the rules and commands of Christ in the Gospel. This is that which the Apostle says *he was not ashamed of.*

2. What is it to be ashamed of the Gospel? Shame in general is a grief, perturbation, and trouble of mind, upon the account of things vile, foolish, or evil, rendring a man (as he thinks) liable to reproach and contempt, working a resolution in him to have no more to do with such things, if once delivered from them. As the prophet *Jeremiah, ii. 26. A thief is ashamed when he is taken.* Two things befall such a person: fear which respects his punishment; and shame which respects the vileness and reproach of the thing that he is taken in. And shame doth particularly respect honour, esteem and repute. Hence if you can by any means take off the disrepute of a thing in mens judgment, they are no more ashamed of it. The world hath prevailed to take off among themselves, and within their own compass, the disrepute of as odious sins as can be committed in the world, and men cease thereupon to be ashamed of them. We meet with men that will not at all be ashamed of swearing, cursing, blaspheming, nay of drunkenness, scarce of uncleanness; the wickedness of the world hath taken off the disrepute of them within their own compass: yet take the same men in lying or theft, and it will fill them with shame; not but that the guilt and evil of other sins is as great, it may be greater than these; but these are under a disrepute, and therefore they are thus ashamed.

Now this shame may be considered two ways:

(1.) Objectively, as to the things that in themselves are shameful, though men may be relieved against them, so as not to have any inward shame in their minds. So the Apostle tells us, *1 Thes. ii. 2. That he was shamefully entreated at Philippi: he had all manner of shameful things done unto him. And Acts v. 41. All the Apostles together rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame.* They suffered shame, but they were not ashamed. *Heb. vi. 6. It is said, those apostate backsliders put the Son of God to open shame.* They did those things unto him, which in their own nature cast shame upon him; they deserted his worship and ways, as if he was not worthy to be followed. Now our Apostle was very far from thinking that nothing of this shame would befall him at Rome; that no shameful thing would befall him. He was led thither bound with a chain, and cast into prison. This is not the shame intended.

(2.) There is shame in the person. And this also may be considered two ways:

[1.] As it merely respects the affections of the mind before mentioned. When persons have a trouble and confusion of mind upon them for any thing wherein they are concerned, as that which is dishonourable, base, vile, or foolish.

[2.] When there are the effects of shame; when men act as tho' they were ashamed, and will have no more to do with those things wherein they have been engaged, but leave them as if ashamed. It is said of *David's* soldiers, who had done no shame-

ful thing, but courageously acquitted themselves in the battle against *Absalom*, but because of *David's* carriage upon that business: *They went every one away as men ashamed, that fly in battle.* It may be there is that light and conviction upon most concerning the Gospel, that it is impossible for them to be brought into perfect trouble and confusion of mind about it, as though it was a shameful thing; but yet perhaps they will do like men that fly in battle, and are ashamed. And in this sense the word is principally used; for saith Christ, *Mark viii. 38. Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, I will be ashamed of him.* How is that? What will the Lord do? He will not own him, which is called being ashamed of him.

Now this is that which the Apostle intends. For the doctrine, saith he, and worship of the Gospel, and for my work in preaching and dispensing it, I have neither trouble of mind, nor will I desert it: *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.*

But you will say, What great matter is this? I am persuaded there is not one present, but will be ready to think, that they would be as forward as the Apostle in this matter. Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ! God forbid. What is there in it, that the Apostle thus signally expresses it, that he would not be ashamed? I answer; Pray consider these three things:

1.) The Apostle here expresses it with especial reference to his preaching and professing the Gospel at *Rome*. *I will come to Rome also*, saith he, *for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.* Now there was at that time at *Rome* a collection of all the great, wise, and enquiring men of the world. And how did they look upon the Gospel and the profession of it? Our Apostle tells you, *1 Cor. i. 23*, as a foolish, weak, contemptible thing. How did they look upon them that professed it? As the filth and off-scouring of all things, *1 Cor. iv. 13*. Here is a collection of the rulers of the greatest empire of the world, of all the wise and learned men, and great philosophers, princes of the world, all looking upon this Gospel, obedience to it, and the worship of God in it, to be as foolish a thing as ever men engaged in, fit for none but contemptible persons. But, saith the Apostle, notwithstanding this, *I am not ashamed of it.*

And we may observe here, that there was not yet at *Rome* any actual persecution of the Gospel farther than shame and reproach. And the Apostle declares by this word, that it is the duty of all men to gather up their spirits to confront present difficulties whatsoever they be. It is loaded now with shame: *I am not ashamed.* It will come to blood: *I will not fear my blood.* He expresseth the whole in this which was his present duty. And for a person of those parts, and that learning which he had, to come among all the wise men in the world, to be laughed at as a babler, as one that came with a foolish thing in his mouth, and to say, *I am not ashamed*: it was the presence of God with him, as well as a sense of duty that enabled him hereunto.

2.) To an ingenuous, gracious soul, in all sufferings, nothing is more grievous than shame. Hence it is reckoned as a great part of the humiliation of Christ, that *he made himself of no reputation*, *Phil. ii. 7, 8*. He forewent all the esteem he might have in the world, as the Son of God. And *Isa. l. 6. He hid not himself from shame.* So *Heb. xii. 2. He despised the shame.* To be dealt withal as a vile person, as the off-scouring of all things, as the *filth and dung of the city*, as the word signifies, to be carried before the face of scorners, makes a deeper impression upon gracious and ingenuous spirits, than any thing else which can be well thought of. Therefore it is a great thing that the Apostle saith: *I am not ashamed of the Gospel.*

3.) There is also a figure in the word called *Litotes*, wherein by a negation of one, the contrary is affirmed, and that emphatically: *I am not ashamed*; that is, *I am confident*, it is a thing I glory in, that I make my boast of, I am ready to do and suffer any thing, according to the mind of God, for the Gospel, willing to undergo whatsoever God calls me to, or to perform any thing he hath appointed for the Gospel.

The opening of these two things will give us ground for our observation from the words, which is this:

Obf. *Not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but to own it, avow it, and profess it, as a thing holy and honourable in all the duties it requires, against all reproaches and persecutions that are in the world, is the indispensable duty of every one who desires to be saved by the Gospel.*

I shall

I shall not produce many testimonies of Scripture to confirm this. But let us all be advised, in such a day as this not to make darkness our refuge, and an unacquaintedness with our duty, our relief; but let us search and see what Christ hath spoken concerning such a day, where there is the profession of the Gospel.

I will give you one place to which you may reduce all the rest, *Luke ix. 26. Who-soever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.* The whole sum of the Gospel is comprized in this; the person of Christ, and the words of Christ. The person of Christ takes up the whole work of the promise; and the words take up all the commands and institutions of Christ. We have heard before what it is to be ashamed of them. And what shall be the end of such? *The Son of man shall be ashamed of them, when he shall come in his own glory, and his Father's glory.* There can be no greater weight put upon words to strike awe and dread into the minds of men. The Son of man who loved us, redeemed us, gave his life for us, shall come again, though now he be absent, and we think things are put off for a season; and then he will enquire into our deportment about the Gospel; at which time he will appear in all his own glory, the glory given him upon the account of his doing his Father's will, and the glory of his Father and the holy angels. Certainly, we should be extremely troubled then to hear Christ say: *I am ashamed of you.* You have the same repeated, *Mark viii. 38.* Our Apostle gives the same great rule, *Rom. x. 10. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness: there is righteousness, let us rest there, what need we do more? Ay, but with the mouth confession is made to salvation:* which confession comprizes all the duties the Gospel requires, and salvation as indispensibly depends upon that, as justification doth upon faith. We cannot be justified without faith, nor can we be saved without confession.

You will say, How can this be?

To clear it to you I shall do three things:

I. I shall shew you what there is in the Gospel that we are in danger to be ashamed of, if we look not well to it.

II. How we may be ashamed of it.

III. I shall give you the reasons why we ought not to be ashamed of it.

I. What is there in the Gospel that we ought in an especial manner not to be ashamed of?

We ought not to be ashamed of whatever is in an especial manner exposed in the world to shame and contempt. The truth is, we do, or have lived in days, wherein it hath been so far from being a shame to be counted a Christian, that it hath been a shame for a man to be counted no Christian. It hath not been the especial duty of believers to profess the Gospel in general, but the common custom of all. The profession of the Gospel which many trust to in this world, is nothing but that conformity to the world which Christ curses. In this sense, no man is ashamed of the Gospel.

But there are some things that accompany the Gospel which are exposed at all times to contempt and reproach, even where Christ and the Gospel are publicly professed; and these we are to take heed not to be ashamed of. I will give you four instances. 1. The special truths of the Gospel. 2. The special worship of the Gospel. 3. The professors of the Gospel. 4. The profession of the Gospel according to godliness. These are things men are very apt to be ashamed of, as being all exposed to shame and contempt.

1. There are some especial truths of the Gospel that in all seasons are exposed to especial contempt and reproach. *Peter, 2 Ep. i. 12.* calls it *the present truth*, which in the primitive times was twofold. The Apostle had to do with *Jews and Gentiles*, and there were two especial truths exposed to contempt and reproach, that he principally insisted upon, and would never forego. With the Gentiles, this was exposed to contempt, reproach, and persecution, that there should be salvation by the cross, *1 Cor. i. 23*; it is *foolishness* to all the Gentiles, saith he, that there should be salvation by the cross. What doth the Apostle do, let go this doctrine, and preach some other? No: he tells you, *chap. ii. 2. He determined to know nothing among them,*

them, but Christ, and him crucified. But when he had to do with *Jews*, where lay the difference? In addition of Judaical ceremonies unto the worship of God, and some place in justification. Thus, *Gal. v. 11. If I preach circumcision, says he, why am I persecuted?* That is, if I preach circumcision as they do, they would persecute me no more. Will he do it then? No: *Gal. vi. 12.* He will not give place; he will preach the cross of Christ, and nothing else; and preach against them, and encourage all to do so.

How shall we know then what are the present truths of the Gospel, that we may take care not to be ashamed of them?

I answer in two things:

(1.) The first is, that we must shut our eyes very hard, or all the world will not suffer us to be unacquainted with them. A man must very much hide himself, if he will not know what the truths of the Gospel are that meet with contempt and reproach in the world; for he may hear of them every where.

(2.) For a general rule take this: consider the ways and methods God hath proceeded in for the manifestation and declaration of himself, and we shall find whereabouts in the general the truths lye, that we are not to be ashamed of, if we will continue our testimony to God.

[1.] God made a revelation of himself principally in and as the person of the Father, the unity of the divine essence acting in the authority and power of the Father in the creation of the world, in the giving of the law, and the promise of sending Christ. What was the opposition the world made unto that declaration of God? for the world doth never make conjunct opposition to the being of God, but unto the declaration that God makes of himself. While God made that declaration under the Old Testament, what was the opposition that the world made? It was plainly in idolatry and polytheism. They would have many gods, or make gods, till he was grown among them an unknown God. The testimony then which the people of God was to bear, and not be ashamed to give, was, the unity of the divine essence.

[2.] In the fulness of time God sent his Son, and he was immediately declared and manifested in the love and work of the Son, the second person. Where lay the opposition of the world? It lay directly and immediately against the person of Christ, and against his cross; it would not believe that he was the Messiah, but called him a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. Wherein then consisted the testimony that believers were to give? Why, it was to the person of the Messiah, the Son of God incarnate, and to the work he had to do. God so revealing and glorifying himself in the incarnation and mediation of the Son, the truths which concerned his person, were those which men ought not peculiarly to be ashamed of, and which the world peculiarly opposed.

[3.] Where the Gospel is preached, the whole work of glorifying God is committed to the Holy Ghost: Christ promised to send him to glorify him, to do the work of God in the world, and carry on all the concerns of the covenant. The Father laid the foundation of his own glory; the Son comes, and professes he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him; and promises to send the Holy Ghost to do his will, to accomplish all the concerns of the covenant of grace. Wherein then lay the opposition of the world to God? It lay in opposition unto the person, doctrine, graces, gifts, and office of the Holy Ghost, as he supplies the room of Christ, to carry on his kingdom in the world. The great opposition that is made in the world against God at this day, is immediately against the work of the Holy Ghost, as carrying on the kingdom of Christ in the world. These are the objects of reproach and contempt.

By the way observe, that the opposition which was made by the heathens in their idolatry against the deity, against God; and that made by the *Jews* against the person of Christ, and that which is now made against the work of the Holy Ghost is all the same; the nature of the opposition is not changed, but only the object. The opposition that was in *Cain*, and the profession in *Abel* is the same still: the one embraces the revelation of God, the other opposes it; and that principle that acts against the Holy Ghost, would act against God, and set up idolatry in the world.

And hence we may see, that whereas God has in the days wherein we live, given a great and illustrious testimony unto the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, it may be as great as in any age since the time he gave extraordinary gifts to the Apostles, and

and Satan had lost the advantage of managing an opposition by open blasphemies and reproaches of the spirit, and being somewhat impatient till it returned into his hands again, he raises up another spirit that should stand in competition with it, and do the same thing; a spirit, which like the unclean spirit that cast him into the fire and into the water, in whom he was, threw those possessed by it into all difficulties to manifest itself. But whatsoever glory it might have put upon it in some men, by enabling them to suffer and bear the rage of the world that was cast upon them, there are three things that will discover that it is not a spirit from God.

1.) The place from whence it comes: it comes not from above, it is not looked for, prayed for, to be the spirit of Christ from heaven which he hath promised; but is a mushroom that grows up in a night, the gourd of a night that springs up within themselves, and is called the light within them all. Now the spirit that doth the work of God is promised from above, is given by Christ, and is expected and received from thence.

2.) It is known also by its company. The spirit which beareth witness with Christ is always accompanied with the word, *Isa. lix. 21. This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, &c.* Now the work of this spirit, is to cast the word of God out of the Church, to render it useless.

3.) It is known by its work. The work of the spirit of God is to glorify Christ; the work of this spirit is to glorify itself, to resolve all into itself, for measure, rule, principle, and all abilities.

I could not but mention this by the way, because I put the great opposition that is made in the world in these days against the spirit of God, his graces and gifts, and the worship which believers are enabled to perform by the spirit, in this thing. And therefore let us try the spirits, and not believe every spirit that is gone forth.

This is the first thing we are not to be ashamed of, *viz.* The truths of God that are reproached in the world, especially those concerning the spirit, his graces and gifts, and the revelation of the mystery of the Gospel, while a heathenish morality is advanced in their place. God forbid we should be ashamed of the Gospel in this respect; that every one of us should not bear his testimony, as God is pleased to call us.

2. There is the worship of the Gospel, which is always exposed to reproach and contempt in the world in the due performance of it. I pray God to keep this always in our minds, that we have no other way to be ashamed of the Gospel, but by being ashamed of these things; and we have no other way to be ashamed of them, than by neglecting the due performance of them, as the Gospel commands.

Men are ashamed of the worship of the Gospel; (1.) Upon the account of the worshipers; and (2.) Upon the account of the worship itself.

(1.) Upon the account of the worshipers, who are for the most part poor and contemptible in the world; for *not many great, not many noble, not many wise and learned are called.* Whatsoever work God hath to do by his, they are looked upon as the off-scouring of all things, such a company as those who are of gallant minds and spirits, do despise. I wonder what thoughts they would have had of Christ himself when followed by a company of fishermen, women, and children, crying *Hosanna*; and others, who said, *This people who know not the law are cursed,* John vii. 49. Now is not a man apt to be ashamed of such objects as follow Christ? Shall a man leave the society of great, and wise, and learned men, to join with them? Let those think of it who are upon any account lift up in the world above their brethren. Don't be ashamed of them; they are such as you must accompany, if ever you intend to come to glory. We must keep company with them here, if we intend it hereafter. And therefore be not ashamed of the worship of Christ because of the worshipers; though they can do nothing but love Christ and worship him; notwithstanding the suffrage that lies against them by great and learned men, such as were at *Rome* when *Paul* was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

(2.) Upon the account of the worship itself. The world is, and ever was in love with a gaudy worship, which some of them have called, being well painted, the beauty of holiness. The *Jews* and *Samaritans* take them in all; the one was for the temple, the other for the mountain. The Gospel comes and calls them from them both, to worship God in spirit and in truth; to a worship that hath no beauty but what is given by the spirit of Christ; nor order, but what is given by the word.

This is greatly despised in the world, and not only despised, but persecuted, I mean, sometimes it was so, I am sure formerly. Therefore the Apostle gives that caution, *Heb. x. 25. If you would not be ashamed, forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.* There is a *Synecdoche* in the word *assembling*, and it is put for *the whole worship of Christ*, because worship was performed in their assemblies; and he that forsakes the assemblies, forsakes the worship of Christ, as some of them did when exposed to danger: and it is the manner of some still to do so. When a fair day comes, then they will go to the assemblies; but in a storm they will absent themselves, as did the *Samaritans*. But what should move them to forsake their assembling? He tells you, *ver. 33, 34. Ye were made a gazing-stock by reproaches and afflictions, and the spoiling of your goods. But you know in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.* This made some weary of assembling; but be not you ashamed of assembling, or of the worship of God. This is the second thing that is exposed to shame and reproach in the world; and which in particular we are bound by our profession not to be ashamed of.

* S E R M O N XXI.

3. **W**E are not to be ashamed of the professors of the Gospel. Our Lord Christ hath laid it down as an everlasting rule, that in them he is honoured, or dishonoured, in the world. And it is the great rule whereby false professors will be tried at the last day; men who pretend a profession of the name of Christ, as you may see, *Matth. xxv. 40, 45; What you have done unto them, you have done unto me, saith he; and what you have omitted, that ought to have been done to them, you have omitted the doing of it unto me.* It is those alone in whom Christ may be honoured or despised in this world: for he is in himself, in his own person in that condition, that our goodness, our honour, extends not immediately unto him; and for the contempt and despising of men, he is not concerned in it. Hence this is reckoned as the great commendation of the faith of *Moses*, *Heb. xi. 23, 24, 25, 26.* that he refused all the honours of the world, and all the reputation he might have had, to own and esteem the poor, reproached, despised, persecuted interest of Christ in the world, as he there calls it. He joined himself unto the professors of the faith, in opposition to all the world, and the greatness of it, which was his greatest commendation. And see the pathetical prayer of the Apostle *Paul* for *Onesiphorus* upon the discharge of this duty. *2 Tim. i. 16, 17, 18. The Lord, saith he, give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.* *Onesiphorus* was a man of some credit and repute in the world; poor *Paul* was a prisoner bound with a chain, that he might have been ashamed to own him; but instead of that, he sought him out, he was not ashamed of his chain. To be ashamed of the poor professors of the Gospel, so in themselves, or made so by the power of oppressors, is to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, his truths, his worship, and his people.

4. There is a special kind of profession, that in its own nature is exposed to reproach in the world. The Apostle *Paul* tells us, *2 Tim. iii. 12. They that will live godly*

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in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. There is, *John* xv. 4, 5. a being in Christ by profession, and not living godly; for there are branches in the vine by profession, that bring forth no fruit; men that have a profession wherewith they do not trouble the world, and for which the world will not trouble them; that can go to that length in compliance with the world, and the ways of it, as that they shall not have one drop of the spirit of the witnesses of Christ, who torments the men of the earth. But *they that will live godly*, that is, engage in a profession, that shall upon all occasions, and in all instances manifest the power of it, they *shall suffer persecution*. We see many every day keep up a profession, but such a profession as will not provoke the world. Now this is to be ashamed of the Gospel, to be ashamed of the power and glory of it, to be ashamed of the author of it; no man can put Jesus Christ to greater shame, than by professing the Gospel without shewing the power of it.

III. I shall now give the reasons why we ought not in any thing to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. I speak unto persons that are under a conviction that such and such things belong unto the Gospel. If we are not, what makes us here this day? I do not go to persuade any, that this or that worship, or this or that way, is according to the Gospel; but I suppose a conviction thereof to be upon us; upon a supposition of which conviction and persuasion, I shall offer these reasons, why we ought not to be ashamed of the Gospel. And,

1. The first is this; because Christ the captain of our salvation, and the great example of our obedience, was not ashamed of all that he had to undergo for us.

There are two things that greatly aggravate things shameful, and press, if possible, shame upon a person.

(1.) The dignity of the person that is exposed to things shameful. It is more for a person honourable, noble, and in repute for wisdom in the world, to be exposed to indignities, reproaches, and things shameful, as the Apostle speaks; than for beggars, poor, vile persons, of no repute. Now consider the person of Christ, who he was, and what he was. He was the *eternal Son of God*, the *first-born of the whole creation*; and, as in his divine nature, he was *the express, the essential image of the Father*, so in his whole person, as incarnate, he was the glory of all the works of God. And the Apostle when he would set out the great condescension of Christ in submitting unto things shameful, doth at the same time describe the greatness and glory of his person, *Phil.* ii. 6, 7, 8. *He made himself, says he, of no reputation; he took upon him the form of a servant, and he was obedient unto the death of the cross*; which three things, as I could shew you, are comprehensive of all that was shameful to Christ. But at the same time that he tells us what he did, how doth he describe him? When he did so, he was *in the form of God, and accounted it no robbery to be equal with God*: he was the great God in his own person, and equal with the Father; yet then this honourable one condescended to all things shameful and reproachful in the world.

(2.) Shame is aggravated from the causes and matter of it. There are various things that cause shame. Some are put to shame by reproaches, scandals, lies; some by poverty; some by imprisonment; and some by death; made shameful by the ways, means, and preparations for it. By which of these was Christ now made an object of shame? By all of them, and inconceivably more than any heart is able to apprehend, or tongue to express. He was reproached as a wine-bibber, and a glutton; as a seditious person, and mover of sedition; as a fanatick, and one besides himself. He was in that state of poverty, that during the whole course of his ministry he had not where to lay his head, nor any thing to live upon, but what good people administered unto him of their substance. In the midst of this course he was taken praying, when he told them, they might have taken him at any time. *I was, says he, in the temple openly, I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.* He was taken by soldiers with swords and staves, as a thief and malefactor; apprehended, carried away, and hanged upon a tree, the shamefullest death then in the world, in the midst of *Jews and Gentiles*, with both which sorts of men that kind of death was the most shameful: the *Romans* put none to that sort of death but slaves, thieves, and robbers, the worst malefactors; and among the *Jews* it was the only kind of death that was accursed; *Deut.* xxi. 21. *He that is hanged on the tree is accursed of God.* Which words our Apostle repeats, and applies them to

Christ,

Christ, *Gal. iii. 13.* How did Christ behave himself now, as to all these shameful things that came upon him? Hear the prophet expressing of it in his name, *Isa. l. 6, 7.* *I gave my back to the smiter, and my cheek to them that plucked off the hair; (the usual way of dealing with persons in such cases) I hid not my face from shame and spitting; for the Lord God will help me, therefore I shall not be confounded; I know I shall not be ashamed.* Did he recoil, or go back from his work? Did he repent of it? No: *Thy law is written in my heart; I am content to do thy will, O God.* And in the issue of the whole, *Heb. xii. 2.* *He despised the shame, and endured the cross, which made way for his glory.*

Now here lies the foundation of our reason: if the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, being engaged purely out of his own love in a work for us poor, vile, sinful worms of the earth, whom he might have left justly to perish under the wrath of God, which we had deserved, underwent all these shameful things, and never had a recoiling thought to draw back, and leave us to ourselves: have we not an obligation of love, gratitude, and obedience, not to be ashamed of those few drops of this great storm that may possibly fall upon us in this world for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ? Can we be disciples of Christ, and yet think in this matter to be above our master? Can we be his servants, and think to be above our Lord? We are delicate and tender, and would fain have all men speak well of us. But we must come to another frame, if we intend to be the disciples of Christ. What would be the issue of our account at the last day, if he should enquire of us what we have done in reference to the profession of the Gospel? Whether we have observed all those duties, that we have had a conviction upon our spirits and consciences we ought to observe and perform in the assembling of ourselves, in the dispensation of the word, in the celebration of ordinances, in prayer, fasting, hearing the word, and all those things which the Gospel requires of us? Should we make that answer: Truly, Lord, we thought all very good, but were afraid if we engaged in them, we should have been exposed to all the reproach, contempt, and trouble in the world; it would have brought trouble upon our persons, and the spoiling of our goods; it would have brought us into great distress? What would then be the reply, according to the rule of the Gospel, but, stand upon your own bottom, that was my day, these were things I required of you; you were ashamed of me, I am now ashamed of you? Certainly this would be a woful issue of it. But,

2. The second reason is this; that whatsoever state or condition we may be brought into, upon the account of the Gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ will not be ashamed of us in that state and condition. I told you before in the opening of the words, that shame principally respects dishonour and disreputation, that the things we are engaged in are vile, contemptible, exposed to reproach. Now if a man in any thing he is called in question about, have those who are great and honourable to abide by him, and own the cause wherein he is engaged, whatever other affections he may have, it will take off his shame. Now this great and honourable person will not be ashamed of us in any condition, *Heb. ii. 11.* *He is not ashamed to call them brethren.* But suppose they are poor, and have nothing left them in this world? 'Tis all one. Suppose they are in prison? Christ will stand by them, and say, *These are my brethren.* The word *ἀσχηματίζω*, *ashamed*, is there used peculiarly in respect to those shameful things that may befall us in this world. Notwithstanding all these sufferings, yet *he is not ashamed to call them brethren.* Doth he go no farther? Yes, *Heb. xi. 16.* *Wherefore (speaking directly to this cause in hand) God is not ashamed to be called their God.* What is the reason it is so expressed? The words are emphatical. Look upon the two parties that are in the world; the one great, wise, glorious, powerful, and at liberty; the other poor, despised, contemned all the world over. God comes into the world and sees these two parties: Which now do you think he owns? Is it not a shame for the great and glorious God to own poor, despised, contemned, reproached, persecuted ones? No: *God is not ashamed to be called their God; their God in particular, their God in covenant, one that owns them in opposition to all the world, with whom they have to conflict.* Oh, that we would persuade our hearts in every duty that this is our state, that Jesus Christ stands by, and saith, *I am not ashamed of you:* God stands by, and saith, *I am not ashamed to be owned to be your God!* Is not this great encouragement?

3. The

3. The third reason is, because in the profession of the Gospel we are called to nothing at all that is shameful in the judgment of any sober, wise, rational, judicious man. If the profession of the Gospel called us unto any thing that is vile, dishonourable, unholy, of ill report among men, certainly we had reason to be extremely cautious of our practising of it. But is it any shame to own God to be our God, to own Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Master, to profess we must yield obedience unto the commands of Christ? Is there any shame in praying, in hearing of the word of God, in preaching of it according to his mind and will? Is there any shame in fasting, in godly conference? Let all the world be judge, whether there be any thing shameful in these things, which are good, useful, honourable to all mankind. The Gospel calls to nothing that is shameful. Therefore the old heathens were so wise that they would not, against the light of nature, oppress the assemblies of Christians where there was nothing shameful; and therefore they charged all shameful things upon them. The whole vogue of the world was, that they met together to farther promiscuous lusts and seditions. They made that their pretence; they durst not disturb them merely upon the account of their profession. And it is so still: men little know that we will not, dare not, cannot take the name of our God in vain, and prostitute any ordinance of God to give the least semblance to any seditious practice. Whatsoever violence may come upon the disciples of Christ, they had rather die than prostitute an ordinance of Christ, to give the least countenance or semblance to any such thing. The Gospel calls us to nothing that hath any reproach in it. If men will esteem the strict profession of the Gospel, praying, hearing the word, abstinence from sin, to be shameful things; if they will count it strange that we run not out into the same excess of riot with themselves; shall we stand to the judgment of such sensualists, that live in a perpetual contradiction to themselves? Who professes that they honour Christ, and at the same time reproach every thing of Christ in the world? We have no reason then to be ashamed of the Gospel, which requires no shameful thing at our hands, nothing that is evil and hurtful to mankind; nothing but what is good, holy, beautiful, commendable, and useful unto all societies of mankind. And we dare not prostitute the least part of an ordinance, to the encouraging any disorder in this world, and therein take the name of our God in vain.

4. The fourth reason is that which the Apostle gives us, *Heb. xii. 1. We are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses*, to this very end and purpose. In the preceding chapter he had given a catalogue of many under the Old Testament, Patriarchs and Prophets, (time would have failed him to reckon up all) who signally manifested they were not ashamed of the Gospel, and the promises of it, whatever difficulties did befall them. And now, saith the Apostle, you *have a cloud of witnesses*, the great examples of those holy souls that are now at rest with God, enjoying the triumphs of Christ over all his adversaries: they were, as you are, conflicting in this world with reproaches, adversaries, persecution; and they had this issue by faith, they made a conquest over all. And James says, *You have, my brethren, the Prophets and Apostles for your examples*. The Lord help us to take the example they have set us, *Acts v. 41.* when they went away triumphing, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame and reproach for the name of Christ. The Lord help us that we dishonour not the Gospel by giving the world reason to say, that there is a race of professors risen up now, who have no manner of conformity to them who went before them in the profession of the Gospel.

5. The next reason I shall insist upon is taken out of the text, the particular reason the Apostle here gives, why he was not ashamed of it. *I am not ashamed*, saith he, *of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God to salvation to all that believe*. We talk of profession of the Gospel. What is it, say some, but canting among yourselves, speaking things unintelligible? Such kind of expressions are cast upon it in the world. But, saith the Apostle, this Gospel we profess is quite another thing than you dream or think of, and we profess it no other, nor ever will engage one day in the profession of the Gospel any farther, than as it comes under this account, that *it is the power of God unto salvation*. Manifest to me, that any way or parcel of the Gospel which we do profess, or practice, hath not the power of God in it, and upon it, towards the furtherance of salvation, and I will throw off that profession.

But you will ask perhaps; In what sense is the Gospel the power of God?

I answer; In a threefold sense.

(1.) Negatively: there is not any other power in it. The world saw that there was a great efficacy in the Gospel, and they knew not whence it was; but they charged it upon two things: *First*, upon the matter of it, that it was a cunningly devised fable. So the Apostle Peter tells us, 2 Pet. i. 16. *We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power of Christ.* The world charged it so, and thought that gave it its efficacy: *Secondly*, there was another thing to which they thought its efficacy was owing, and that was the eloquence and power of its preachers. The preachers of it were surely eloquent, excellent men, that they could so prevail upon the people, and win them over to the Gospel. No, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. *My speech and preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the spirit, and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.* But let not men mistake; the efficacy of the Gospel is owing to neither of these causes, but to the divine power that accompanies it.

(2.) It was the power of God declaratively: it made known the power of God. So our Apostle declares in the very next words to the text: *For therein, saith he, is the righteousness of God revealed.* It hath made a revelation of the way whereby God will save men. It makes a revelation of that power which God puts forth for the salvation of men,

(3.) It is the power of God instrumentally. It is the instrument God puts forth to effect his great and mighty works in the world. Preaching is looked upon as a very foolish thing in the world. *We preach Christ crucified, to the Greeks foolishness,* 1 Cor. i. 23. But God hath chosen this foolish thing to confound the wise. And tho' the preachers of it are very weak men, mere earthen vessels, God hath chosen this weak thing to bring to nought things that are strong and mighty, the things of this world. Therefore, Acts xx. 32, it is called *the word of God's grace, which is able to build us up, and give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified.* The plain preaching of it hath this power upon the souls of men, to convince them, convert them, draw them home to God, to expose them to all troubles in this world, to make them let go their reputation and livelihood, and expose themselves even to death itself: it is the power of God to these ends and purposes; God hath made it his instrument for that end. If it were the power of God to give peace and prosperity unto a nation, or to heal the sick, there is no man need, or ought to be ashamed of it; but to be the power of God for so excellent an end, as the eternal salvation of the souls of men, makes it much more glorious. The Gospel we profess, all the parts of it, every thing wherein it is engaged, is that whereby God puts forth his power to save our poor souls, and the souls of them who believe: and the Lord God never lay it to the charge of any who would hinder the dispensation of the Gospel unto this end and purpose. It were sad for men to keep corn from the poor, physick from the sick, that lye a dying; but to keep the word of God from the souls of men, that they might be saved, Lord, lay it not to the charge of any.

The Author of the Gospel was not ashamed of his work, he engaged in on our behalf; is not ashamed of us in any of our sufferings, in any of the shameful things we may undergo. The Gospel requires no shameful thing at our hands; puts us upon no duty that can justly expose us to shame; the things are good, useful, honourable to men. We have a cloud of witnesses about us: and if any man require of us, what this Gospel is, which we profess, and an account whereupon we profess it, we can make this answer; *It is the power of God unto salvation;* and for that end alone do we profess it.

I might speak to some farther reasons, to shew why this duty is indispensibly necessary; for, as I said, it is not only that we ought not to be ashamed, but the duty is indispensable. And I thought to have spoken to those two heads, which alone make a duty indispensable, that we may not upon any account be against it; because it is necessary, as we say, *Neessitate Præcepti;* and likewise, *Neessitate Medij;* that is, both upon the command of Christ, and upon the account of the order of the things themselves.

It is necessary upon the command of Christ, because he hath required it at our hands, and under that condition, that if ever we intend to be owned by him at the last day, we should own his Gospel in the profession of it. All the world, and all our own things, and all the injunctions of the sons of men, cannot give a dispensation to our souls to exempt them from under the authority of the commands of Christ. Let us look unto ourselves, we are under the commands of Christ, and there is no one particular duty to be avoided, but what must be accommodated to this rule. And not only so,

But it is necessary also from the order of things: Christ hath appointed it as a means for that great end of bringing our souls to salvation. As well may a man arrive to a city, and never come into the way that leads unto it, as we go to rest with Christ, and never come to the profession of the Gospel, nor abide by it: this is the way that leads unto it.

I have done with what I thought to deliver upon this doctrine, and among many *uses* that might be made, I shall only commend one unto you, without which it will be utterly impossible that any of us shall be able at the long run to keep up to the profession of the Gospel, or any duty of it. And that is this,

Use, Get an experience of the power of the Gospel, and all the ordinances of it, in and upon your own hearts, or all your profession is an expiring thing: unless, I say, you find the power of God upon your own hearts in every ordinance, expect not any continuance in your profession. If the preaching of the word be not effectual unto the renewing of your souls, the illuminating of your minds, the endearing of your hearts to God, if you do not find power in it, you will quickly reason with yourselves, upon what account should you adventure trouble and reproach for it.

If you have an experience of this power upon your hearts, it will recover all your recoiling, wandering thoughts, when you find you cannot live without it. It is so as to every ordinance whatever, unless we can have some experience of the benefit of it, and of the power and efficacy of the grace of God in it, we can never expect to abide in our profession of it. What will you bear witness unto, an empty, bare profession, that neither honoureth God, nor doth good to your own souls?

If you would then be established in this truth, of not being ashamed of the Gospel, recal to your minds what benefit you have received by it. Have you received any advantage by hearing the word? Hath it at any time restored your souls when you have been wandering? Hath it comforted you when you have been cast down? Hath it engaged your hearts unto God? Recal to mind what benefit and advantage you have had by it; and then ask, what it hath done, that now you should forsake it? And in every ordinance that you are made partakers of, enquire diligently what power of God upon your own hearts goes forth in the dispensation of that ordinance. This will confirm and strengthen you; and without this, all your profession is vain, and will signify nothing.

S E R M O N

* S E R M O N XXII.

Christ the Saints Rock.

PSAL. lxi. 2.

From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

THERE are two things in the words. *First*, The state wherein the psalmist was. *Secondly*, The course that he steered in that state. His estate is doubly expressed: 1. from the place where he was: *from the end of the earth*: And 2. from the condition he was in: *His heart was overwhelmed*.

And in the course he steered there are two things also. 1. The manner of it: *He cried unto the Lord*. 2. The matter of that cry: *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I*.

First, There is the state wherein he was. And, 1. The first description of it (for both parts are *metaphorical*) is from the place where he was: *The end of the earth*. Now this may be taken two ways: either naturally, and then it is an allusion to men that are far distant and remote from help, relief, and comfort: or, as I may say, ecclesiastically, with reference to the temple of God, which was *in medio Terræ*, *In the midst and heart of the land*, where God manifested and gave tokens of his gracious presence and favour: as if he had said; I am at the end of the earth, far from any tokens, pledges, or manifestations of the love and favour of God; as well as from outward help and assistance.

2. The second description of his state is, That his heart was overwhelmed. Wherein we have two things.

(1.) A confluence of calamities and distresses. (2.) The effect they had upon him; his heart was overwhelmed, and fainted under them. As long as the heart will hold up they may be borne: *The spirit of a man will bear his infirmity*; but when *the spirit is wounded*, and the heart faints, a confluence of calamities greatly oppresses.

What is meant by *overwhelmed*, himself declares in another place. *Psal. cii.* The title of the Psalm is, *A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed*. And he describes that condition in the Psalm itself, ver. 3, 4, &c. *My days are consumed like smok, and my bones are burnt as an hearth. My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. I am like a pelican of the wilderness, I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top. Mine enemies reproach me all the day, and they that are mad against me, are sworn against me. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine indignation and thy wrath, for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.* To be overwhelmed is to be under a confluence of all manner of distressing calamities: *Psal. cxliii.* 3, 4. he describes again what it is to be overwhelmed: *When my*

spirit was overwhelmed within me, I looked on the right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul. So that to have a confluence of manifold distresses, with an eye to the indignation of God, as the spring of those distresses, until the spirit sink and faint under it, is to have the heart overwhelmed. This is his state and condition.

Secondly, The course he takes in this state, as we have already observed, is also doubly expressed.

1. In the manner of it: *I cried, faith he, unto thee.* The word is frequently used in this case in Scripture; and it is naturally expressive of the principal actings of faith in a distressed condition.

There are four things that faith will do in a condition of distress in believers; and they are all of them compriz'd in this expression: *I cried.*

(1.) It will make the heart sensible of the affliction. God abhors the proud and the stubborn, that think by their own spirits to bear up under their pressures. *Isa. xvi. 12. Hearken, ye stout-hearted, who are far from righteousness.* Persons that think to bear themselves up, when God dealeth with them, by their stout heart, are such, whom of all others God most despises and abhors: They are *far from righteousness.* Now crying doth include a sense of evils and pressures the soul is exercised withal, and that we do not despise God when we are chastened, as well as that we do not utterly faint, but cry unto the Lord.

(2.) The next act of faith is an holy complaint unto God in such a state and condition. So the *psalmist* tells us, *Psal. cii. A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.* He often mentions *his complaint, coming with his complaint unto the Lord.* And God takes nothing more kindly, than when we come to him with our complaints, not repining at them, but spreading them before the Lord, as from whom alone we expect relief: for it declares we believe God concerns himself in our state and condition. There is no man so foolish, whatsoever he suffers, as to go unto them with his complaints whom he supposes are not concerned in him, nor have any compassion for him. It is a professing unto God, that we believe he is concerned in our condition, when we cry unto him, and pour out before him our complaints.

(3.) There is in it an endeavour to approach unto God. As you do when you cry after one whom you see at a distance, and are afraid he will go farther from you. It is the great work of faith to cry out after God at a distance, when you are afraid lest at the next turn he should be quite out of sight. Crying to the Lord, supposes him to be withdrawing or departing.

(4.) There is earnestness in it. It is expressive of the greatest earnestness of spirit we can use, when we cry out in any case.

Thus he behaves himself during the condition described. He had a sense of his distress; he makes his complaint unto the Lord; he cries out after him for fear he should withdraw himself; and that with earnestness, that God might come in to his help.

2. The matter of it is, That God would *lead him to the rock*, that is, that God would give him an access unto himself by Jesus Christ, in whom God is our rock and our refuge in all our distresses: that he would but open a way through all his dark and overwhelming entanglements, that he might come unto himself, there to issue the troubles and perplexities that he was exercised withal.

That which I would speak to you from the words thus opened, is this:

Obf. *In the most overwhelming, calamitous distresses that may befall a believing soul, faith still eyes a reserve in God, and delights to break through all to come unto him; though at the same time, it looks upon God as the author of those calamities.*

I have told you before in the opening of the words, what I intend by these overwhelming distresses. They are of two sorts, inward and outward.

First, Inward, in perplexities upon the soul and conscience about sin. When the soul is in darkness, and hath no apprehension of any ground upon which it may have acceptance with God; when it is pressed with the guilt of sin, and abides in darkness upon that account, and hath no light.

Secondly, Outward, and these are of two sorts.

1. Private, in afflictions, losses, sickness, pains, poverty, either as to ourselves, or those who are near unto us, and wherein we are concerned. These may sometimes have such an edge put upon them, as to prove overwhelming.

2. Publick, in reference unto the Church of God; when that is in great distress, when there is no prospect of relief, no beam of light; when the summer is past, and the harvest ended, expectations come to an issue, and no relief ensues: this is an overwhelming distress to them, whose hearts are in the ways of God, and have a concern in his glory. When *Zion* is in the dust, and the bones of the children of *Zion* lie scattered like wood upon the face of the earth.

These are the heads of overwhelming distresses. And I say, faith looks upon them as proceeding from God. Is the soul in distress upon the account of sin? They are God's rebukes, God's arrows, it is God that hath caused this darkness. Is it troubled or pressed upon the account of afflictions or dangers? *Affliction*, faith faith, *doth not spring out of the earth*, or troubles from the ground: these things are from God. Is it with respect unto the Church of God, *Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers*? Is it not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? It is therefore his wrath and indignation in all these things. Yet notwithstanding this, faith will look through all, and make a reserve in God himself.

I shall

I. Give some instances of this.

II. Shew the grounds of it.

III. Come to that which I chiefly intend, namely, to discover what it is in God that in such an overwhelming condition faith can see and fix upon, to give it support and relief.

IV. Shew how this differs from that general reserve which the nature of man is apt to take in his thoughts of God in distress.

I. I am to give some instances. And we have a very remarkable instance of this in *Jonah*, who tells us, *chap. ii. 2.* that he was in *the belly of hell*. *Hell* in Scripture, when it is applied to the things of this world, doth intend the depth of temporal evils; as in *Psal. xviii. 4.* *The sorrows of hell compassed me*, saith *David*, speaking of the time of his affliction and persecution under *Saul*. And *the belly of hell* must needs be the darkness and confusion of all those calamitous distresses. Where did *Jonah* (viewing himself in this condition) look for the cause from whence it did proceed? He tells us, *ver. 3.* *for thou hast cast me into the deep*. He knew the occasion of it was his own sinful forwardness; the instrumental cause, the mariners upon his own persuasion; but he refers it all to the principal cause, God himself: *Thou hast cast me into the deep*. And how did this affect him? *ver. 7.* *My soul fainted within me*. What relief then had he? *ver. 5, 6.* *The waters compassed me about, even to the soul, the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapt about my head; I went down to the bottom of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever*. No manner of relief, support, or succour to be expected. What did he do in this case? He tells presently: *My prayer came in unto thee*, saith he, looking upon God as he who had cast him into this condition; his eye was to him. *David* gives us several instances of it in himself. Once I acknowledge he was mistaken in his course. He tells us so, *Psal. lv.* in the 3, 4, 5. verses he had described the overwhelming condition wherein he was. And what course doth he take? *ver. 6.* *O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest; I would wander afar off, and be in the wilderness*. O that I was gone from the midst of all these perplexities, that I was rid of those that are ready to overwhelm me. But this was not a right course. I might give innumerable instances of the contrary: *Psal. xxxi. 8, 9, 10, &c.* is a description of as sad a condition as any man can fall into, and which is accompanied with a great sense of God's displeasure, and of his own sin, *ver. 10.* *My strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed*. What course doth he then take? *ver. 14.* *But I trusted in thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my God*. When my strength failed because of mine iniquities, and my bones were consumed; when there was nothing but distress round about me, and that from God; yet then *I trusted in thee, and said, thou art*

my God. And this is what God himself invites us unto, *Isa. xl. 27.* There is a complaint made by *Jacob: My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God.* We have but two things wherein we are concerned in this world, as we are professors of the Gospel; and they are, our *way*, and our *judgment*. Our *way*, that is the course of obedience and profession, which according to the truth we are engaged in; as believing in Christ is called *a way*. My way of faith, my way of worship, my way of obedience is hid from the Lord; God takes no notice of it; which is as much as to say, my all in the things of God is at a loss, God takes no notice of my way. Should that be our condition, really we should be of all men most miserable. But there is also our *judgment*, that is, the judgment that is to be past upon our cause, and way, which *David* doth so often pray about, when he begs that God would *judge him in his righteousness*. Now faith the Church here, God takes no notice of it, but hath put off the cause to the world; my judgment is passed over, determined for me no more, but he lets me suffer under the judgment of the world. And truly when our way and judgment is passed over, profession and obedience as it were hid from God, God takes no notice of them. And when he puts off the judgment and determination of our cause, what have we more in the world? What doth God now propose to them for their relief? What promises, what encouragements will he remind them of? Nothing but himself, *ver. 28. Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.* God calls them to consider him in his own nature and being, with those glorious acts suited thereunto. He calls our faith to look for rest in himself alone. It is impossible thy way and thy judgment should thus pass over from him, because he is *the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator*.

II. I come now to the grounds of it, whence it is that faith doth this. And that is upon a twofold account.

1. Because it knows how to distinguish between the nature of the covenant, and the external administration of it.

2. Because it is natural to faith so to do; and that upon a double account, as we shall see presently.

1. Faith doth this, because it is able to distinguish between the covenant itself, which is firm, stable, invariable; and the administration of the covenant, which is various and changeable; I mean, the outward administration of it. And this God teaches us, *Psal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34.* *If his children [the children of Jesus Christ] forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments: If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail, my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.* The covenant of God shall stand firm and unalterable then, when the rod and the stripes of men are upon our backs. In the midst of all God's visiting for iniquity, whether by internal rebukes, or outward chastisements, yet faith sees the covenant stable, and so makes unto God upon that account. *David*, when he comes to die, gives it as the sum of all his observation, that the covenant was immutable, but the outward administration various, *2 Sam. xxiii. 5.* *Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.* However God doth deal with my house, whatever misery is brought upon us, yet the covenant itself is everlasting, ordered in all things and sure. Whatever misery and distress may fall upon a believing soul, and I pray God help me to believe it, as well as to say it, whatever darkness or temptation he may be exercised withal upon the account of sin, whatever pressure in afflictions, persecutions, dangers, may befall him; they all belong unto God's covenant dispensation in dealing with him. For God being his God in covenant, he acts according to the covenant in all things. Hence saith *Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 16.* *O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.* What are these things? Why, saith he, *I reckoned till morning, that as a lion so will he break all my bones; from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it; I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.* One would think the next words would

would be: *By these things men die.* No: but *by these things* believers *live, and in all these things is the life of my soul*; because they are all administered from the invariable covenant for the good of the souls of them who are exercised with them. Now as God is pleased to declare himself, so is the soul to think of God in these dispensations of the covenant. Doth God hide his face, and leave the soul to darkness? In darkness it must be. *Job xxxiv. 29. When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? And when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?* Whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only; be it against one person, or the whole Church of God; if he hides his face, and causeth darkness, none can behold him. When God chastens us, we cannot but look upon him as angry; when he gives us up into the hands of men, hard masters, we cannot but look upon it as a token of his displeasure. When God doth thus in his outward dispensation of the covenant, so that all things are dark, and shew nothing but displeasure, and we are to look upon him as a God that hideth himself, and is displeased with us, and exercising anger towards us; in such a day, what shall the soul then do? Why under all these outward tokens of God's displeasure, faith will, though but weak and faint, work through unto God himself, as invariable in his covenant, and there have a reserve in him beyond them all. *Psal. cxvii. 2. Clouds and darkness are round about him; but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.* I confess I have clouds and darkness round about me, but if I could but break through these clouds and darkness, that are the consequents of God's hiding his face, and come to his throne, there is righteousness and judgment, that righteousness and judgment wherein he hath betrothed me unto himself in covenant, *Hos. ii. 19.* Could I get through this darkness of mind, this pressure upon my spirit, this sense of guilt, and come unto his throne; there I should find him faithful and stable in his promises, and unalterable in his love. Now suppose a person to have all these things upon him at once; that God hath left him to a great sense of sin, (for our troubles about sin are not according to the greatness of our sin, but to the sense God will let in upon us; and they are not to be reckoned the greatest sinners, who are most troubled for their sin) and his troubles are very great; and at the same time the Lord in his providential dispensations is pleased to exercise him in sharp afflictions; and if at the same time his interest and concernment in the people of God is likewise in darkness and distress, that there is no relief in that neither; to such an one there are clouds and darkness round about God. What then will faith do in such a case? Why true faith will secretly work through all to the throne of God, where there is righteousness, and judgment, and acceptance with him. So it is said, *Isa. viii. 17. I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.* The face of God is his love in Christ, and the shining of his countenance in the promises of the covenant; for the way whereby God communicates his love unto our hearts, is by his promises. Now when the soul is sensible of no communication of love, nor promise of it, then God is said to hide his face. What will faith do in such a case? betake itself unto any thing else for relief? No, faith he, *I will wait upon God that hideth his face.* As a traveller, when the sky is filled with clouds and darkness, tempests and storms, that are ready to break upon him every where; yet remembers that these are but interpositions, and the sun is where it was, and if he can but shelter himself till the storm be over, the sun will shine out again, and its beams refresh him: so is it with the soul in this case, it remembers God is still where he was; though there are clouds within, and distresses without, sorrow, and anguish, and fears round about us, and the enemy enters into the very soul; yet the sun is where it was still, God will hide us where we may abide till this indignation be overpast, and the light of his countenance will yet shine upon me again. Faith considers God in the midst of all his various administrations, and so finds a way for relief.

2. Faith will naturally thus act, as it is the principle of the new nature in us that came from God, and will tend unto him, whatever difficulties lye in the way.

Evangelical faith will have a secret double tendency to God.

(1.) Upon that necessary respect which it indispensibly and uncontrollably hath to Jesus Christ; for it being the purchase of Christ, and wrought in us by his spirit, and being the product and travel of the soul of Christ, it hath a natural tendency unto him: *1 Pet. i. 21. Who by him do believe in God*; by Christ as Mediator, as our surety, undertaking for us. That let what will overwhelm the soul, where there

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is but the least faith, it will have relief in this, that Christ was substituted in its room against all real indignation and wrath from God. The father of the faithful was once reduced to great distress, when he had lifted up his knife to the throat of his only son; but when destruction lay so near at the door, a voice called to him from heaven, and stopped him, and he looked behind him and saw a ram caught for a sacrifice to God. When many a poor soul hath the knife at the throat of all his consolations, ready to die away, he hears a voice behind him, that makes him look and see Christ provided for him, as a substituted sacrifice in his room.

(2.) The new creature is the child of God, whereof faith is the principle. It is begotten of God, of his own will; and so against all interpositions and difficulties whatsoever is tending to him.

III. I now proceed to shew, what it is, that in such an overwhelming condition, as I have described, faith regards in God, to give it a support, and relief, that it be not utterly swallowed up, and overwhelmed. And,

1. The first thing faith considers in such a condition, is, the nature of God himself, and his excellencies. This is that which God in the first place proposes for our relief: *Hof. xi. 9. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger; I will not return to destroy Ephraim.* What reason doth he give to assure us that he will not? *For, saith he, I am God, and not man, the holy one in the midst of thee.* He proposes his own nature to our faith to confirm us, that whatever our expectations be, he will not execute the fierceness of his wrath; and he reproaches them who put their trust in any thing that is not God by nature. So *Deut. xxxii. 21. They have provoked me with that which is not God.* And he curseth him *that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm,* Jer. xvii. 5. But he proposes himself for our trust, one of infinite goodness, grace, bounty, and patience.

Now there are two ways whereby God proposes his nature, and the consideration of it, for the relief of faith in overwhelming distresses.

(1.) By his name. The name of God, is God himself, *Psal. ix. 10. They that know thy name will put their trust in thee;* that is, they that know thee. Whatsoever the word itself signifies, yet it is the nature of God that is declared by his name. And you know how he doth invite and encourage us to trust in the name of God: *The name of God is a strong tower, the righteous fly thereto and are safe,* Prov. xviii. 10. *Isa. l. 10. Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* The name of the Lord is what he declares himself to be: *The Lord God, gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,* Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Here he reveals and declares his name. God proposes his name, and the declaration of it, against the working of unbelief, which apprehends, that he is severe, wrathful, that he watcheth for our halting, treasures up every failing and sin to be avenged of it, and that he will do it in fury. No, saith God, *fury is not in me,* Isa. xxvii. 4. The Lord is good and gracious, as appears by his name, especially as revealed in Christ; so that faith will find secret encouragement in it in all distresses.

By the way, hence you may observe, that God in former days, whilst revelation was under a progress, and he revealed himself by little and little, did still give out his name according as the state and condition of his Church and people required, because he called them to trust in his name. How did he reveal himself unto Abraham? He tells you, *Exod. vi. 3. I revealed myself unto Abraham by the name of God Almighty.* So *Gen. xvii. 1.* he says to him, *I am the Almighty God.* And he gives an explication of that name, *Gen. xv. 1. I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.* Abraham was in a state and condition wherein he wanted protection in the world; for he was a stranger, and wandered up and down among strange nations that were stronger than he, and such as he might fear destruction from every day. Fear not, saith God, for *I am God Almighty; I am thy shield.* And in the faith of this did Abraham travel among the nations. And at that time he had no child. What end then should he have of all his labour and travel? Why, saith God, *I am thy reward.* And *Gen. xiv.* where there is a discourse about the nations of the world, who began to fall into idolatry, Melchizedek is called *a priest of the most high God.* God revealed himself to be a *high God*, to cast contempt upon their dunghil Gods. And when Abraham came to speak with the king of Sodom, he says, *I have sworn by the high God.* So when God came to bring the people out of the

land of *Egypt*, he revealed himself unto them by his name *Jehovah*. I did not reveal myself so before, saith God, but now I reveal myself so, because I am come to give subsistence unto my promise. Thus God dealt with them when he came to maintain his Church by gradual revelations. But now God reveals himself by his whole name, and we may take what suits our distress, especially that which is comprehensive of all the rest, *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

(2.) God doth this by comparing himself to such creatures as act out of natural kindness: *Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yet I will not forget.*

Now there are three reasons why it is necessary that faith in an overwhelming condition should have regard to the nature of God, and the essential properties of his nature for its relief. [1.] Because of the circumstances of our distresses. [2.] Because of the nature of them; and [3.] Because of the nature of faith.

[1.] Because of the circumstances of our distress. There are three or four circumstances that may befall us in our distress, that faith itself can get no relief against them, but from the essential properties of the nature of God.

1.) The first is place. Believers may be brought into distress in all places of the world: in a lion's den with *Daniel*; in a dungeon with *Jeremiah*; they may be banished to the ends of the earth, as *John* to *Patmos*; or they may be driven into the wilderness, as the woman by the fury of the dragon. The whole Church may be cast into places where no eye can see them, no hand relieve them; where none knows whether they are among the living or the dead. Now what can give relief against this circumstance of distress which may befall the people of God? Nothing but what *Jeremiah* tells us, chap. xxiii. 23. *Am I a God at hand only, and not afar off, to the ends of the earth?* Psal. cxxxix. 7. *Whither shall I fly from thy presence? to the utmost ends of the earth?* It is all in vain: the essential omnipresence of God can alone relieve the souls of believers against this great circumstance of various places, whither they may be driven to suffer distress, and be overwhelmed with them. If the world could cast us out, where God is not, and hath nothing to do, how would it triumph? It was a part of their bondage and great difficulty of old, that the solemn worship of God was confined to one certain country and place; so that when the enemies of the Church could cast them out from thence, they did as it were say unto them, Go, serve other gods. God hath taken off that bondage; all the world cannot throw us out of a place where we cannot worship God. Wherever there is an holy people, there is an holy land, and we can be driven to no place but God is there: and if we should be compelled to leave our land, we have no ground to fear we shall leave our God behind us. God's essential omnipresence is a great relief against this circumstance of distress, especially to souls that are cast out where no eye can pity them. Should they be cast into dungeons, as *Jeremiah* was, yet they can say, *God is here*.

2.) It is so likewise with respect to time. The sufferings of the Church of God are not tied up to one age or generation. We can see some little comfort and relief that may befall us in our own days; but what shall become of our posterity, of future ages? Why God's immutability is the same throughout all generations; his *loving kindness fails not*, as the *Psalmist* saith; which is the only relief against this distress. Alas, if a man should take a prospect of the interest of Christ at this day in the world, and consider the coming on of wickedness like a flood in all parts of the earth, he would be ready to think, What will God do for his great name? What will become of the Gospel of Christ in another age? But God is the same through all times and ages.

3.) There is relief to be found in God, and only in himself, in the loss of all, when nothing remains. Should a man lose his lands, if his house remains, he hath something to relieve him, he knows where to repose his head under his cares. But when all is gone, what can relieve him? Nothing but God and his all-sufficiency. This was *Habakkuk's* comfort if all should fail him; yet, saith he, *I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation*.

4.) The last circumstance of distress, is death, with the way and manner whereby it may approach us: and how soon this will be, we know not. When all this state and frame of things shall vanish, and we prove to have an utter inconcernment in things below; when the curtain shall be turned aside, and we shall look into another world; the soul's relief lies in God's immutability, that we shall find him the same to us in death as he was in life, and much more.

S E R M O N

* S E R M O N XXIII.

IN my former discourse upon this text, I told you, that there were three reasons why faith betakes itself to the nature of God for relief in overwhelming distresses. The first was taken from the circumstances of those distresses; the second from the nature of them; and the third from the nature of faith itself.

I mentioned four circumstances in such distresses that nothing can relieve the souls of men against, but the consideration of God's essential properties, which I shall not here repeat, but proceed to the second reason.

[2.] There are some distresses that in their own nature refuse all relief that you can tender them, but only what is derived from the fountain itself, the nature of God. *Zion's* distress did so, *Isa.* xlix. 14. *Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me.* And chap. xl. 27. *My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God.* She was in that distress that nothing but the nature of God could give her relief. God therefore proposeth that unto her: *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not,* ver. 28. A man would think sometimes it was no difficult thing to answer those objections which believing souls charge against themselves, even such as we are well and comfortably persuaded are believers. But it frequently falls out quite otherwise, and nothing will bring them to an issue, but the consideration of the infinite grace and goodness that is in God.

Nay, there may be temporal distresses that in their own nature will admit of no other relief. As when the whole Church of God is in extreme calamity in the world, which nothing can remove but infinite power, goodness, and wisdom. You know how *Moses* was put to it when God told him he would deliver *Israel* out of *Egypt*. He looked upon it as impossible, and raised objections till it came to that, *Exod.* iii. 13. If it must be so, tell me *thy name*. And God revealed his name: *I am that I am.* Till God confirmed him with his name, that is, with his nature, *Moses* could see no way possible how the Church should be delivered. And so it falls out with us, as with *Moses*. When God did not appear, *Moses* thought he could have delivered them himself, and goes and kills the *Egyptians*; but when God appeared, he could not believe that God himself could do it, till he gave him his name.

But some may object; when faith comes to approach unto God to find relief as God proposes himself in his name, it will find other things in God besides his goodness, grace, and mercy: there is severity, justice, righteousness in God, which will give as much discouragement on the one hand, as the other properties will give encouragement on the other: to come to God and see him glorious in holiness, and infinite in severity and righteousness, here will be discouragement.

I shall answer this briefly, and so pass on.

1.) It is most true that God is so: he is no less infinitely holy, than infinitely patient and condescending; no less infinitely righteous, than infinitely merciful and gracious: but these properties of God's nature shall not be immediately glorified upon their persons who go unto him, and make their addresses in faith, tho' he will be so to others. There is nothing but faith can take a proper view of God. Wicked mens thoughts of God are referred unto these two heads. *First*, they think wickedly, *that God is altogether such an one as themselves*, *Psal.* l. 21. While under the power

of their corruptions and temptations, while in pursuit of their lusts, they have no thoughts of God, but such as these. The meaning of which is, that he is not much displeased with them in what they do; but hath the same care of them in the way of their sins, as of the holiest in the world. *Secondly*, their other thoughts are commonly when it is too late, and God lets his terrors into their souls, what the prophet saith in *Isaiah*: *Who of us shall dwell with eternal fire?*

2.) God hath given believers assurance that he will not deal with them according to the strictness of his holiness, and severity of his justice. So speaks *Job* xxiii. 3, 4. *O, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come to his seat, I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.* But doth he know of whom he speaks? and what this great and holy one will speak when he appears? Yes, ver. 6. *Will he plead against me with his great power? No, but he will put strength in me.* God will not plead with me by his dread, and terror, and great severity; but he will put strength in me. Therefore, *Isa.* xxvii. 5. he bids them *lay hold on his arm.* Who dare lay hold on God's arm? *Let them lay hold upon my arm that they may have peace, and they shall have peace.* Poor creatures are afraid to go to God because of his power; but fury is not in me, saith God.

3.) It is impossible for faith ever to consider the nature of God, but it hath a secret respect unto Jesus Christ, as the days-man, or umpire between God and the soul, and as he by whom, as to all that concerns these properties of his nature, his severity and justice, are already manifested and glorified.

[3.] There is one reason more why the soul will thus in overwhelming distresses betake itself unto the nature of God, as manifested by his name; and that is taken from the nature of faith itself. The formal reason of faith is the veracity of God's word. What we believe with divine faith, we believe upon this account, that God hath revealed and spoken it. And the ultimate object of faith is God's all-sufficiency. And whatsoever you act faith immediately upon, it will not rest, and be satisfied, till it comes, as it were, to be immersed in the all-sufficiency of God; like the stream of a river that runs with great swiftmess, and presses on till it comes to the ocean, where it is swallowed up. It is said, *1 Pet.* i. 21. that through Christ we *believe in God.* Christ is the immediate object of faith, but God in his all-sufficiency is the ultimate object of faith.

Again, faith acts thus, because it is the great principle of that divine nature which God hath inlaid in our souls, created in us, and whereof he is the Father; for *of his own will he hath begotten us by the word of truth.* Faith therefore, as it is the child of God, the new nature that God hath ingrafted in us, has a natural tendency towards God; so that it is working in and through all to God himself who is its Father. This is the first thing that the soul considers in God, that faith makes its application unto for relief.

2. In an overwhelming condition faith finds relief in sovereign grace; that is, grace as it is absolutely free. What I mean by it, is that which is mentioned, *Exod.* 33. 19. *I will be gracious unto whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy upon whom I will shew mercy.* The things we stand in need of, are grace and mercy: the principle from whence they flow, and are bestowed, is the sovereign will and pleasure of God. God refers the dispensation of all grace and mercy merely unto his own sovereign will and pleasure. Now when the soul can find nothing in the promise, nothing in any evidence of the love of God, or in the experience that it hath formerly had, it betakes itself unto the sovereignty of grace. And in sovereign grace there are two things:

(1.) That God is able to give relief in the state and condition wherein we are; whatever we stand in need of, mercy, life, salvation, God is able to give it; whatsoever he will do, he can do. And this in the Scripture is made a great encouragement of rest upon God. Thus *Dan.* iii. 17. when *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego* were in that great and overwhelming distress, what did they relieve themselves withal? *If it be so, say they, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.* If God will not; it is not, if God cannot; for he can do what he will. If he had not been able, they would not have worshiped him. There is nothing for these sixteen hundred years that hath seemed

harder to be effected, than the call of the *Jews*; but the Apostle gives us this ground yet to fix our hopes upon, in the expectation of it: they may be grafted in, *for God is able to graft them in again*, Rom. xi. 23. The very power of God, that he is able to do whatever he pleases, is a foundation for faith to act upon, and relieve itself by. And therefore God pleads it emphatically, *Isa.* l. 2, 3. where he tells them, that his hand is not shortned that it cannot save; but he is still able to do it. *Is my hand shortned at all*, saith he, *that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? Behold at my rebuke I dry up the sea: I make the rivers a wilderness: I cloath the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.*

Now there are four things that are included in this very apprehension of faith, that God is able to do this whatever our condition be.

[1.] There is nothing contrary to his own nature in it. There are things that are contrary to the nature of God, and these things God cannot do. *God cannot lie*, Tit. i. 2. Heb. vi. 18. It is one part of God's infinite perfection, that he can do nothing contrary unto his own nature. So that whatever I believe is of God's sovereign grace which he is able to do, I believe there is nothing in it contrary unto the nature of God. Whatever apprehensions we have of pardon of sin, it includes an atonement; for without an atonement God is not able to pardon our sins; God cannot do it without satisfaction unto his justice. So that every soul that hath an apprehension that there is sovereign grace in God, whereby he is able to relieve and help him, he includes in that apprehension, the belief of an atonement, without which God cannot do it. He cannot deny himself. It is the judgment of God, that *they that commit sin are worthy of death.*

[2.] If God be able, there is nothing in it contrary to any decree of God. There are many things that may be contrary to God's decree, that in themselves were not contrary unto his nature; for the decree of God is a free act of his will, which might have been, or not have been. But when the decree of God is engaged, if any thing be contrary unto it, God cannot do it, for he is not changeable.

Now the decree of God may be taken two ways.

1.) For his eternal purpose concerning this or that person or thing. But this I intend not.

2.) The decree of God signifies *Sententia lata*, *A determinate sentence*, that God hath pronounced against any person or thing, contrary to which God will not proceed. So *Zeph.* ii. 2. we are invited to *seek the Lord, before the decree bring forth*; that is, before God hath passed an absolute and determinate sentence in that matter and case. When *Daniel* would assure *Nebuchadnezzar* of his doom, he tells him it was *the decree of the Most High*, chap. iv. 24. So in the case of *Saul*, *God hath rejected thee*, saith *Samuel*, 1 Sam. xv. 26. But will he not call it back? No: *The strength of Israel will not lie*, ver. 29. The sentence is gone forth, and it shall stand. God rejected the house of *Eli* from the priesthood; 1 Sam. ii. But will he not return again? No: *The iniquity of the house of Eli shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever*, chap. iii. 14. So it was with them of whom God swore in his wrath, *they should never enter into his rest*. Now while there is faith in God's sovereignty, if there be no decree in the case, there is hope. But if God had decreed, and put forth his oath, he would not have raised my faith to look after sovereign grace, which declares an ability in God, that he can do it.

[3.] It includes this, that there is nothing in it contrary unto the glory of God; for this is the measure of all that God doth in all his dealings with us; he aims in all things at the manifestation of his glory. And we are not to desire any thing that is contrary to the glory of God. We are not to desire that God would not be holy and righteous because of us, that we might be saved in our sins, and while we are obstinate in them. This is to desire, that God would not be God, that we might live. But now to save an humble, broken, contrite sinner, a poor guilty creature, that lies at his feet for mercy, to deliver poor distressed believers from ruin and oppression, is not inconsistent with the glory of God. God can do this for the advancement of his glory. I have known it go well with some poor souls, when they could come to believe this, that to save and pardon them, was not contrary to God's nature, decree, and glory.

[4.] There is this in it also, that if there be need of power, God can put it forth; that power which carried *Abraham* through all difficulties, *Gen.* xviii. 14. *Is any thing*

thing too hard for the Lord? What is your difficulty? It may be an overwhelming guilt of sin: *Is any thing too hard for God?* What is your distress? A wicked, prevailing corruption. *Is any thing too hard for God?* In outward distresses that lye upon the Church of God, there is this relief in sovereign grace: *Is any thing too hard for God?* Every thing is too hard for us, but nothing is too hard for God. This is the first thing in sovereign grace; that God is able.

(2.) If it be so, then all that we have to do is resolved into the will of God. So that all I have to do in this world, is but to go to God, as the leper did unto Christ: *Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.* If God will, he can pardon, sanctify, save me. And if God will, he can deliver his Church and people. Here lies the whole question, it is all resolved into his will.

Now two things ensue after once a poor soul hath resolved all his concerns into the will of God.

[1.] There will be an end put unto all other entangling disputes and dark thoughts, which overwhelm the mind: for now, saith the soul, it is come to this, that my whole condition depends upon God's sovereign pleasure. *David* somewhere makes his complaint, that he was in the mire. A poor creature is bemired, and the more he plungeth, the faster he sticks. When a soul is in this condition, saith God, *Be still, and know that I am God*, Psal. xlv. 10. And now all is rolled upon the will of God.

[2.] When once we can resolve our conditions absolutely without farther dispute into the will of God, innumerable arguments will arise to persuade the soul that God will be willing. I will name some of them.

1.) One is taken from that goodness and graciousness of his nature, which we have been before considering and proposing unto you; and doth now properly in this place occur unto us. Suppose any of us had a business with a man, whom we believe to be a good man, a man that hath something of the image of God upon him, and the matter is to us of great importance, it may be as much as our lives are worth, and he can easily do it without any prejudice or disadvantage unto himself, with one word; can we cast a greater reflection upon this man than to think he will not be willing to do it? that merely to do us a mischief and spight, he will change his own nature, and act contrary to his own principles? Shall we then question the good will of God? Shall we question, when all is resolved into his will, that he will not give us out grace and mercy in time of need? Our Saviour presses this argument, *Luke xi. 11, 12, 13.* and in other places, where he brings the issue as near as possible, telling us, it is not to be expected that a child, who finds nothing but his father's will to hinder, will mistrust his giving him bread. *And if ye being evil, saith he, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly father give the holy spirit to them that ask him?* And when we can bring the concerns of God's Church and people merely to his will, his own nature will supply us with arguments enough to confirm our expectation that he will do it.

2.) There is another great argument, when all is brought to the sovereignty of the will of God, which is mentioned, *Rom. viii. 32.* *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up unto death for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Shall I question whether God will do this thing or no, considering this great instance of his will? It was his will to send Jesus Christ to die for poor sinners. He did not send him to die in vain, and that his death should be lost. If God were not willing to give out grace and mercy to sinners, wherefore did he send Jesus Christ? Why did he give his own Son out of his bosom? Why did he not spare him, and cause our iniquities to meet upon ourselves? Can God give a greater sign of his readiness to spare sinners, than his dealing with Jesus Christ? That is the second thing which faith considers when it comes unto God for relief in an overwhelming condition; sovereign grace, that God is able, all things are resolved into his will.

3.) Faith in this matter takes into consideration that one particular property of the grace of God in Christ, which is mentioned, *Eph. iii. 8.* *The unsearchable riches of Christ.* Saith faith, there is more grace and more mercy too in God (for these are God's riches that are here intended) than possibly I can see and look into. Will the mercy that hath been declared unto my faith, the promises that have been discovered and revealed unto me, give me satisfaction? No, they will not. I cannot be

be satisfied with what I have received; with what discoveries have been made unto me of the grace of God. But faith the soul, there lye behind unsearchable riches of grace, which I can by no means conceive, which all the world, or all the angels in heaven cannot find out. This is a great relief in an overwhelming condition.

4.) Once more, faith in such a condition learns to resolve former experiences, not into its own present condition, but into the unchangeableness of God. And this one thing being wisely managed, is enough to relieve our souls under many overwhelming distresses that do befall us. The *Psalmist* doth see, *Psal. lxxvii.* He had experience of God, *ver. 6. I call to remembrance my song in the night.* Compare it with that in *Job xxxv. 10. Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?* David intends some such intimation of the love and good will of God as made him rejoice in the night season. But what is his state now? He tells you, *ver. 2.* that it is the *day of his trouble*, that *his sores run in the night and cease not, his soul refuses to be comforted.* And *ver. 7, 8, &c. Will the Lord cast off for ever? Will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* In this grand and overwhelming distress, where doth he find relief? He resolves his experience into the unchangeableness of God, *ver. 10. This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.* He that gave me that former song in the night season, tho' now I am nothing but darkness, and ready to fear his mercy is quite gone for ever; yet, he is the same, and he will give in the like experience again: though I am changed, he is not.

3. I should go farther to shew what respect faith in such a condition hath unto the covenant of God; but I cannot now insist upon it.

IV. I thought to have shewn you also in the last place, the difference between the faith of the godly, and that of unbelievers; that which the worst of men will have in God in the time of their distresses; and that relief which true evangelical faith finds in an overwhelming condition. But I see it would take up too much time.

One word of *use*, and I have done.

Use, This is an overwhelming time; a time wherein many are at the ends of the earth literally, and many metaphorically; a time and season wherein most that fear the Lord are obnoxious to some overwhelming distress or other. Suppose that God hath not let forth upon many at this day an overwhelming sense of guilt, that there are not many tempted, wounded, and troubled (though some there are which we meet with every day) yet I have great reason to fear, that if we were all rightly awakned, an overwhelming distress would come upon the minds of men from the want of humility, holiness, fruitfulness, faith, and love, which ourselves have sometimes enjoyed, and is proposed unto us, and which the examples of them who are gone before us, lead us to enquire after. Are none overwhelmed with the hardness of their hearts, instability of their spirits, overgrown with careles, empty, light, worldly frames? Truly, more or less, we have all reason to be overwhelmed, and we have shewed you a little where our relief lies in this state and condition.

Are we ready to be overwhelmed with the calamitous condition of the people of God all over the world? and as to ourselves, our goods, and personal concerns, any thing that is near and dear unto us? I pray God make our hearts jealous over it, especially those that are at ease, in their health and prosperity. When God throws others of his people into the furnace, such have great reason to be jealous, lest he deal more severely with them, than the poorest saint that wants a morsel of bread. Well, you see the way of relief in this case also. It is God alone unto whom we must make our application. He is willing to receive us, because of the goodness of his nature; and he is able to save us, because of the abundance of his grace and power.

S E R M O N

✱ S E R M O N XXIV.

A Christian, God's Temple.

2 COR. VI. 16, 17, 18.

---For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.



HERE are three things in these words:

First, The privilege of believers, especially as they are the Church of God. They are the temple of the living God, as God hath said.

Secondly, The Duty, which by virtue of that Privilege, is incumbent on all believers. Wherefore, saith he, Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.

Thirdly, A promise made unto the due performance of the duty by virtue of that privilege. And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

You may well think I shall not speak at large to these things. I intend only so far to touch upon them, as just to lead me to what I think is the present sin of this nation, and what are the causes of the judgments upon it.

In *ver.* 16, believers are said to be dedicated, consecrated, and made holy to God, as his peculiar lot and portion. And then the use of it is to shew the twofold sin for which judgment cometh upon this nation. The first is, That the nation deals not with them as God's consecrated lot and portion: that is the sin of the nation. The second is, That they behave not themselves as God's consecrated lot and portion: that is the sin of the people of God.

I shall spend some time in confirming my foundation. You have it with the ground of it, *Rev.* v. 9. where the Church speaks to Christ, *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests.* Before the purchase of them by Christ, they lay in the common lot of mankind; they were in the people and tongues, and kindred and nations of the earth. Christ makes a purchase of them. He did not die to redeem all, but to redeem some out of all the kindreds, and nations, and tongues under heaven. Upon Christ's making a purchase of them, they are no more their own. *Ye are bought with a price*, saith the Apostle, *ye are not your own.* Whose then are they? They are Christ's, *Rom.* xiv. 9. *For this cause he both died and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living; that is, of the whole Church, alive and dead, that they might be his.* He

* This Sermon was preach'd March 27, 1674.

took them all into his disposal. And what did he do with them? When they were absolutely his own, and in his power to dispose of them as he saw good, he dedicates them to God: *He makes us kings and priests unto God*, saith he. Christ might have disposed of his purchase another way; but this course he took, he dedicates them unto God. Kings and priests were so, as I shall shew you afterwards. The Apostle *Peter* tells us the same of all believers, *1 Pet. ii. 9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar, or purchased people.* The same is expressed again, *Tit. ii. 14*, and in sundry other places which I shall not insist upon. But there is one expression of it which must be taken notice of, and that is where they are called the *first-fruits unto God*, *James i. 18. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.* And *Rev. xiv.* he expresses it again, *These were they that had not defiled themselves, and they were the first-fruits unto God.* When God gave and sanctify'd all things unto his Church of old, he reserved the first-fruits unto himself; these were all to be dedicated to him; every one in his way whereof he was capable; clean beasts by sacrifice; men by redemption, corn and wine by a meat-offering: but God retained all the first-fruits to himself: he laid it upon the land as a rent charge, that he might keep up his title to the whole. So he tells them, *Lev. xxv. 23. The land is mine*, saith he, *and ye are but strangers and sojourners with me.* All the concernments of the Church of God are God's. He entertains us in his house, at his table, and sustains us with his ordinances. God took the first-fruits as an acknowledgment that they held all from him; and when he would take them no more, he destroy'd the land.

Now God takes believers that they may be a kind of first-fruits unto himself of the Creatures. He satisfies himself with believers throughout the world to be first-fruits of the whole creation. And if God should cease from taking these first-fruits, he would destroy the world. To what end should he maintain this fabrick at such an expence of power, patience, forbearance, goodness, wisdom, if there came no revenue to him? Now he never took any revenue but the first-fruits. And if any one (as I shall afterwards shew) do put forth their hands to this portion of God, he will be sure sorely to revenge it. For the most part this is the state of things among worldly men, the more they have, the readier they are to lay their hands upon the portion of others: but I am sure the more men have throughout the world, the readier they are to lay their hands upon the portion of God. But saith he, *Jer. ii. 3. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase, all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them*, saith the Lord: they shall contract guilt, and they shall have punishment fall upon them. *All that devour them shall offend*: if that were all, they would not much care for it: but *evil shall come upon them*, saith the Lord.

Let us a little enquire how believers come to be dedicated, consecrated, and made holy unto God, to be his temple, tabernacle, first-fruits, his lot and portion, as they are called?

Why this notion is taken from the Old Testament, and it is spoken of in allusion to what was in use there, when both persons and things were dedicated to God.

By what way then were things dedicated and consecrated to God, made his portion, and became holy?

There were four ways whereby this was done.

- I. By special call, and legal constitution.
- II. By Unction.
- III. By inhabitation. And
- IV. By vow, and actual separation thereupon.

There is no other way whereby any thing was ever dedicated to God under the Old Testament. And we shall find all these ways believers are dedicated and consecrated unto God.

I. There was a dedication to God by special call, and law constitution. So *Aaron* was dedicated to God to be a priest, *Exod. xxviii. Take to thee Aaron and his sons with him from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priests office.* What was this? *No man*, saith our Apostle, *takes this honour to him-*

self, unless called of God, as was Aaron. Aaron was called of God to be dedicated a peculiar priest unto him. And this was confirmed by the law of the priesthood: He was made a priest after the law of a carnal Commandment, saith he. And Numb. i. 50. God took the Levites to the service of the tabernacle, whereby they became his portion: and chap. iii. 3, 4, 5. they are separated upon God's call.

This then is the first way whereby God takes any thing unto himself, and by which any one is separated and dedicated unto God. It is by a solemn call, and legal constitution thereupon.

II. The second way whereby any thing was dedicated unto God, was by unction. So Aaron, after his call, to compleat his dedication, chap. 29, was anointed in his consecration; and so were his sons. In like manner Elisha was anointed to be a prophet in the room of Elijah. And David was anointed to be king over Israel. It was the great consummating ordinance whereby any were dedicated unto God. In Exod. xxx. 22, &c. you have the institution of the making of this oil. *Ye shall not, says God, make any other like it, after the composition of it, it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, shall be cut off from his people, or putteth any of it upon any stranger.* What is the meaning hereof? Why, this anointing oil, wherewith the priests and all the holy utensils of the altar were anointed, was a type of the graces and gifts of the spirit of God. And where God hath given the gifts and graces of his spirit for holy ministrations, for praying, for preaching the word, for administering the ordinances; for any one to make an oil like it by liturgies, homilies, and the like, is to act contrary to this command. All that is done in the whole liturgical, ceremonial course, is nothing but to make an oil like the oil God hath made for his sanctuary, which he doth so severely prohibit any man to put his hand unto, for this reason, because it was a type of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost that were to be poured out upon Christ, and believers under him.

This is the second way whereby any thing was consecrated unto God.

III. The third way whereby the temple (as believers are peculiarly said to be God's temple in the text and other places) and tabernacle were consecrated, was by inhabitation. God consecrated them unto himself by a glorious inhabitation, and dwelling in them. He came and dwelt in them, thereby they became peculiarly his own. And this God did two ways. 1. By an extraordinary sign of taking first possession of his house, and entering into it, that all might take notice that this was his house. 2. By ordinary constant pledges of his presence.

1. He did it by an extraordinary sign of his taking possession of his house. When the tabernacle was built, and ready to be set apart for service, the glory of the Lord filled it, Exod. xl. It was a dark cloud, for then God dwelt in thick darkness. And 1 Kings viii. 10. when the temple was built, God came by a glorious sign, and took possession of it. The glory of the Lord filled the temple: and this also was a cloud. God took possession of those houses, the tabernacle, and the temple, by a cloud, to signify those types and veils which the people was under, that they could not see to the end of those houses which were to denote the coming of the Son of God to fix his tabernacle among us, by taking human nature upon him.

2. God did it by a visible pledge of his abode and residence. Now this was the ark and the mercy-seat encompassed with the cherubims, which had the direct form of a throne; the ark being supported to such a height, the mercy-seat placed upon that, and the cherubims shading it as arms, had the direct appearance of a throne. Hence the ark is sometimes called *the glory of God*. It is called *the King of glory*, Psal. xxiv. *Lift up your heads ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory* (that is, the glorious ark which was the type and representation of God's dwelling gloriously in the tabernacle and temple) *may come in*. There are these two things required to inhabitation; A glorious entrance by an extraordinary sign; and a constant residence by an ordinary pledge: and both these were in the dedication of the temple and tabernacle. And two things ensued thereon,

(1.) A special manifestation of God's glory. Where he dwells there is a special manifestation of his glory. God is every where, but is not said to dwell every where. He fills heaven and earth by his omnipresence; but God's dwelling signifies something more, not only his being, his essential, eternal being, but the manifestation of that being also. So heaven is said to be his dwelling place and throne, because God doth most gloriously manifest himself to those creatures of light, his holy saints and angels, that

that come to the enjoyment of him. In the tabernacle, and in the temple there was such a manifestation of God's glorious presence continually: this made them holy. And hence it is, that if all the men in this world should agree together to build a glorious fabrick for the worship of God, suppose at *Jerusalem*; and when they had done, dedicate it to God with all the power they have, they cannot make it holy, unless God come to take possession of it by a visible pledge of his presence, and appoint a token of his presence to be in the place. The very notion that some men have, though you may think there is little in it, that they can dedicate any thing to God, hath been the greatest ruin that ever befel religion in this world. It hath wholly cast out all apprehensions of God's portion from the minds of men, and erected another portion for God which was never called, never anointed, never inhabited by God himself. And that hath occasioned men who contract the guilt of persecuting God's only dedicated portion, to put the notion of sacrilege upon tythes and tithes, and I know not what, that God never dedicated, nor put his name upon, nor ever took possession of. There is no dedication to God, but it must be by these means. And

(2.) The special worship of God must by God himself be confined unto it. And truly we have great reason, considering what conflicts and contests are befallen us in these latter days, which only divine wisdom could foresee, to bless our dear Lord Jesus Christ for that good word of liberty he gave us: *The day cometh that neither at Jerusalem, nor in this nor that mountain, men shall worship God; but he that worships God, let him worship him in spirit and in truth.* This sets us at liberty from all ways, places, and forms of mens finding out, and dedication.

That is the third way.

IV. There is one way more, and that is, by special vow of things that are in our power, giving them up to God according to his mind. So did *Jacob*, Gen. xxviii. 22. *Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.* Men are usually very tenacious of what they have got, they are loth to part with any portion of it, no not to God himself; therefore doth *Jacob* so well express it here, *Of all that thou shalt give me, I will give the tythe to thee.* If ever *Jacob* had any thing God did not give him, that was all his own, and so he knew full well; for when he comes to call over this business again, he remembers, that *with his staff he went over Jordan, but God had now made him two bands.* When men gave to God according to his mind, of things in their own power, they were under the law, made holy unto the Lord.

Now, I say, believers are dedicated, consecrated to God, and become his portion by all these several ways.

First, They are so by calling, which was the first way. God calls them out of the world to be a peculiar portion unto himself: *Rom. i. 7.* They are *called to be saints*, and separated unto God. So likewise, *1 Cor. i. 2.* Now though this calling doth also imply effectual, internal vocation, whereby the heart and nature is really sanctify'd; yet it also includes an external separation and dedication unto God. Christ redeems us out of the world, and he calls us out of the world. An obediential compliance with that call of God for separation from the world, makes us to be God's dedicated portion. *Come out from among them and be separate*, saith God. If we live in the world, after the manner of the world; if we are like the world in our ways and walk, in our affections and conversation, we have no reason to look upon ourselves as the dedicated portion of God. He that is so, brethren, that is thus called to be God's, he endures the world, and doth his own duty in it, and that is all his concern. I say, he endures the world. That which is the world, and properly so, hath nothing pleasing to him, only he doth his own duty in it. If we intend to be at all interested in this great privilege here, let us secure ourselves that we are God's portion by calling, that we have complied with his call to separate ourselves from the world. The people of God dwelt alone of old, and were not reckoned amongst the nations. Our mixtures in the world, our conformity to the world, our touching of the unclean thing, is the sin of professors at this day, whereby they are concerned in procuring all the judgments that God is pouring out upon the land.

Secondly, Believers are made God's peculiar portion, and are dedicated to him by unction. I will first shew that they are anointed, and then how they are anointed.

1. The Apostle says, *2 Cor. i. 21. He that hath established us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God.* And you know that place, *1 John ii. 20, 27. We have an unction from the Holy One; and the anointing which ye receiv'd of him, abideth in you.* It is plain therefore, that believers are anointed. God in his providence did suffer that name to go upon us, that we should be called *Christians*, which is in English, *Anointed ones.* That is the name of God's people in the world. How well we answer that name, many of us may do well to consider.

2. We cannot know how we were anointed, how we became Christians, but by considering how our head was anointed, how Jesus became Christ. Christ was anointed, *Isa. lxi. 1. The spirit of the Lord is upon me, for the Lord hath anointed me.* *Heb. i. 9. God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* Wherein consisted the unction of the *Messiah*? the anointing of the Most Holy? which was prophesied of, *Dan. ix. 24.* How did Jesus become Christ? Truly I have elsewhere so largely insisted upon the communication of the spirit of God to the human nature of Christ, how, and for what end, that I shall not here speak to it again. In a word, it was the gift of the spirit of God, with his gifts and graces in an immeasurable manner to the humane nature of Christ: *For God giveth not the spirit unto him by measure, John iii. 34.* So he is therefore said to be *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows:* How to his fellows? *Eph. iv. 7. To every one of us is grace given, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.* All believers have their measure. He had no measure. This anointing consists in the communication of the graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost to all believers. This is our unction, thence we are called Christians. And those who despise the spirit of God, and his graces and gifts, will find little relief in calling themselves Christians, another day.

But how doth this anointing dedicate believers unto God? It doth it two ways.

(1.) It gives a peculiar interest unto God in them, which is not in any others. Where there are the gifts and graces of the spirit of God, there God hath something that is not in any part of the world beside: it is indeed the way whereby God takes possession of any soul; he comes and deposes this treasure there. There is my treasure, saith God, I lay it up there, and thereby I take possession of this soul to be mine.

(2.) Every thing dedicated to God, was to be employed in the service of God. And this anointing makes us able to serve God according to his mind and will, when we can do so no otherwise. There is no serving of God without the graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost. God abhors all service proceeding from any thing else.

Thirdly, By inhabitation: the spirit of God dwells in believers. I must say of this also, as I did of what went before; I have shewn so at large how the spirit of God dwells in, and inhabits in believers, and how they are his temple and tabernacle, that I shall not speak more to it now, but only apply to the case of believers what was said before, that wherever God inhabits, he first takes possession in a cloud, and dwells in a visible pledge of his presence.

1. When God converts a soul, he comes into it *with* a cloud. I know nothing in this world that I would be more jealous of in my ministry, than of speaking any thing in conversion or regeneration, that I had not experience of myself. I would not bind others by any experience of my own, unless it be confirmed by a general rule. For one man may have an experience that another hath not. And we ought to be wonderful tender in giving out any thing that should be found in persons as to conversion, and regeneration, if we have not a general rule for it, as well as our own experience. But yet, I think, this I can say, that God generally takes possession of souls in a cloud; that is, there is some darkness upon them, they cannot tell what their state is, sometimes they have hopes, and sometimes fears; sometimes they think things are well, and sometimes they are cast down again. This is the way whereby God generally enters into all souls. These things may be in part where God doth not come; but seldom have I heard of any that have come unto God, but that God first took possession of them in a cloud.

2. God doth it by some visible pledge of his presence, when the cloud is over; for the cloud is but for a season, though it may continue upon some longer than upon others. I have shewn before, that the pledge of God's visible presence in the temple and tabernacle, was the ark and the mercy-seat, form'd into the fashion of a throne,

throne, with cherubims; which was a type of Jesus Christ. The ark had the law, and the mercy-seat was propitiatory, covering the law from the eye of justice, and so atonement was made. And this was a type of Christ.

How then doth God dwell in the hearts of believers by constant residence? When Christ is enthroned in the heart; and we can have no farther pledge of it. There may be a great deal of duty, careful and wary walking, and a great deal of profession; but if Christ be not upon the throne in the heart, there is no pledge of God's dwelling there. So God dedicates his people by inhabitation.

Fourthly, The last way whereby any thing was dedicated unto God, was by vow and covenant. Now we are all of us under a twofold dedication to God by vow and covenant. The one in general, whereof the token is baptism. And we are likewise under a particular vow and dedication as we are a Church. What I pray is our engagement to walk with God in professed subjection to all the ordinances of Christ, but to give up ourselves to God by vow and covenant to be his, by a dedication of ourselves according to God's appointment and mind? God helps us to look unto it, every one of us in our several places and stations. There is more in these things than we are aware of.

Now as there was never any other way whereby any thing could be dedicated to God, and believers being all these ways dedicated unto him, they become his peculiar portion. They shall be mine, saith God. They are God's kings, priests, tabernacle, temple, sacrifice: *Yield your bodies a living sacrifice.* And they are God's *first-fruits*, called so expressly.

There are two *uses* follow necessarily from hence.

Use 1. If believers, especially as they are in Church relation, which adds the last hand of dedication by particular Church vow and covenant, to be God's; if believers, I say, are thus God's peculiar portion, dedicated unto him, it is not in my power to give warning unto the world, to take heed how they meddle with this portion of God. They do not, they will not hear me; and if I could speak unto them, it would rather provoke them, than cure them. But give me leave to say this, and to give glory and honour unto God therein, that among all the sins that so reign in the nation at this day, and have done so for a long season, that which hath peculiarly stirred up the displeasure of God against the nation, so as to threaten us with spiritual judgments, the giving us up to popery, which men are afraid of, and with temporal judgments of all sorts whatever, hath been the violence that hath been done to God's portion all this nation over. Other sins are great and provoking, but God hath given the earth to the children of men: *He endures with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.* He will bear with men in all their abominations, leave them for many ages, in many places of the world, to sport themselves in the earth, like the *Leviathan* in the waters. But when a nation comes (as it hath been the sin of this whole nation, from one end to the other) to put forth its hand against God's portion, tearing, rending, destroying, imprisoning, banishing, starving the remainder of God's heritage, it is the cause (let it be spoke to the glory of God, and that which God will own at the last day) why wrath is gone out against us. This hath not been done in a corner by some few, at some certain times. We have known the day when the whole nation, as one man, was on fire to consume the residue of God's heritage, it was the sin of the nation, from one end of it unto the other; saith God, *All that devour her shall offend, evil shall come upon them.* There hath been a great devouring of God's first-fruits, and truly in such a manner that we have no greater cause to mourn this day, than that we have not been sensible of it as we ought to be, how these first-fruits of God have been devoured. But they shall offend, and evil shall come upon them. It is the very word that God speaks to the nation this day, if I understand any thing of the will of God in these matters. He speaks so again, *Jer. xii. 14. Thus saith the Lord against all my evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit, Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them.* What is the inheritance God hath caused us to inherit? It is his ordinances, his ways, and worship: it is not the great things of this world; let all take their portion and lot, as God in his providence directs. The inheritance which God causeth *Israel* to inherit, is his ways and worship, the purity of his ordinances, and their serving Christ in them. This is our inheritance.

inheritance. Saith God, *I will pluck up my evil neighbours, that will not leave my inheritance.* Let them take what is their own; but they will not leave my inheritance. That generation of vipers, those evil neighbours of God's inheritance every where, that have been devouring it, and taking of it away, their doom is read in the prophet, and will come upon them in God's appointed time. The great sin that is upon the nation, and which we ought to bewail, and be humbled for, is the violence they have done to God's portion. It hath not been done by this and that person; no man hath cared for *Zion*, none hath pitied her, there have been none to plead her cause, none to relieve her, while her friends have died in prisons, been impoverished, banished, &c.

Use 2. There are sins with us, even with us also against the Lord our God. And our great sin is this, that notwithstanding all the violence that hath been shewed us, all the fears, troubles, perplexities that we have undergone, yet we have not been willing to come out from among them, and be separate, but we have cleaved greatly to the unclean thing. There may be a time, and there hath been, when God calls his people to a local separation. So he did to his people in *Babylon*: *Come out of her, my people.* And we can remember the day, when God carried many of his people out of this nation into a wilderness, and there hid them for a season. They were under the call of God to a local separation. I see no ground for that now. God binds men down by his providence to their stations; relation and duty binds them down to bear a testimony to the ways of Christ, against all those wicked oppositions that are made unto them. But to separate more in the holiness of our lives and conversations, to keep more from the uncleannesses and vanities of the world, all the abominations of it; God's call is upon us all for this. These two things being thus met together, *viz.* violence upon the portion of Christ, upon God's separate ones; and neglect of duty in those separate ones, to separate themselves more and more from the world. Who can save? Who can deliver? And what can be our expectation while this frame doth abide? I wish I had a little more time to press this upon us, that if we intend to be made partakers of the last thing in my text, which is the promise that God will *receive us, and be a Father to us*, and use us as his sons and daughters; if we would be made partakers of it, when an apprehension of an interest in it, will be worth ten thousand times more than all this world can afford: then let us stir up ourselves to this great duty of farther and daily separation from the world in things moral and spiritual, in our minds, in our spirits, in our ways, in our whole course; that if it be the will of God, there may be some interposition for the saving of the land.

S E R M O N

* S E R M O N XXV.

Gospel Charity.

COL. iii. 14.

And above all these things put on Charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

THE word ἀγάπη, which we here translate charity, is the only word used in the New Testament to signify *love*. And I wish we had always rendered it so, because in our common use of speech, charity is restrained to one effect of love in relieving the poor, and afflicted, which is no where the sense of the word in Scripture. It is love then that is intended. *Above all these things put on love.* There is no grace nor duty but the exercise and practice of it is commanded in the Scriptures, and most of them fall under particular commands, and are enjoined absolutely; but there is but this one, that I remember, which hath a preference given unto it in a command above other things, as here, ἐπὶ πάντων ὁ τῆς ἀγάπης, *Above all these things put on love*: So 1 Pet. iv. 8. περὶ πάντων, *Before all things have fervent love among yourselves.* And so in that of our Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 31. he had given them directions about the use and improvement of spiritual gifts for the edification of the Church; (and it is an excellent way to have the Church edify'd by the due and orderly exercise of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in the elders and members) but when he hath done, he adds, *Behold I yet shew you a more excellent way*: and that is this duty of love, as he shews in the next chapter. It is not only commanded, but it hath a special eminency and excellency put upon it in reference to all other duties for some certain end.

That which I shall at present discourse upon, is this:

Obs: Love, and its exercise, is the principal grace and duty that is required among, and expected from the saints of God, especially as they are engaged in Church-fellowship.

I shall not prove it in general, but speak to these three things:

I. I shall shew you the nature of this love that is thus signaliz'd in the Gospel precept.

II. Give you the reasons of the necessity and importance of it, by mentioning some of them the Scriptures give.

III. Lay down some directions for its practice.

I. Concerning the first we may observe, that the love here intended is the second great duty that was brought to light by the Gospel. There is nothing of it in the world, neither as to the degree, nor as to the knowledge of it, but what proceeds from the Gospel. The world neither hath it, nor knows what it is. Variance, strife, wrath entered by sin; for when we fell off from the love of God, and from his love to us, it is no wonder if we fell into all hatred and variance among ourselves. The

** This Sermon was preach'd June 5, 1673, upon the uniting of Mr. Caryl's Church with the Doctor's.*

love of God was originally in the state of innocency, the bond of perfection; when that was broke, all the creation fell into disorder; all mankind in particular into that state described by the Apostle, *Tit. iii. 3. Living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.* There is carnal and natural love still in the world, that follows necessarily upon natural relations; and the same is in some degree in brutes themselves. There is also a love that arises from a society in sin, in pleasure, from a suitableness of humour in conversation, or of design as to political ends, to which heads you may reduce all the love in the world; but all these are utter strangers from this evangelical love. And therefore when it was brought to light by the Gospel, there was nothing so much amazed the heathen world, as to see this new love among christians. It was even a proverb among them: *See how they love one another.* To see persons of different sorts, different nations, tempers, degrees, high and low, rich and poor, all knit together in love, was the great thing that amaz'd the heathen world. And I shall shew you the grounds of it afterwards.

You may likewise observe, that this love is the means of communion between all the members of the mystical body of Christ, as faith is the instrument of their communion with their head Jesus Christ. And therefore our Apostle doth seven or eight times in his *Epistle* join faith and love together, as the entire means of the communion and fruitfulness of the mystical body of Christ. And in one place he hath so ordered his words, to shew their inviolableness and indissolubleness, that you must make a distribution of them to gather their right sense. It is in *Philemon*, ver. v. *Hearing of thy love, and of thy faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and towards all the saints.* A man would think that both the objects relate to both the duties, faith and love towards Christ, and towards all the saints. But though Christ be the object of our love also, the saints are not the object of our faith: so that you must make a distribution of the words: *Hearing of thy faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, and of thy love towards all the saints.* But the Apostle so places them to shew how indissoluble these things are, that they must go together; where the one is, there will be the other; and where the other is not, there that will not be. It is therefore the life, and soul, and quickning form of all duties that are performed among believers toward one another. Whatever duties you do perform, be they never so great and glorious, never so useful one to another, to any of the members of Christ; if they are not quickned and animated by this love, they are of no value to thy communion with Christ, and edification of the Church. And men may perform many things that appear to be duties of love, without love. In the *two verses* before the text, saith the Apostle, *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. But above all these things put on love.* So that all these things may be, yet not love. Those which seem to be the greatest and most effectual fruits of love whatever, yet they may be all without love. We may forbear without love, forgive without love, be kind to one another without love; and all this of no use, if above all these things, over and upon them, we do not superinduce love, if we be not quickned and acted by love. The truth is, he that shall read over the New Testament, especially those things which we have most reason particularly to consider in it, which are the special instructions and commands that Christ left unto his disciples when he was going out of this world, would think this same love, whatever it be, is the sum and substance of all that Christ required of us, as indeed it is. And the Apostle *John*, who lived long, and lived to see the christian religion much propagated in the world, and very probably saw a decay of love, wrote his *first Epistle* almost to this very end and purpose, to let us know, that there was neither truth of grace, nor evidence of the love of God to us, nor of our love to God, unless there was fervent and intense love towards the brethren. Whatsoever we think of ourselves and of our profession, if there be not an intense love unto the brethren, we have neither the truth of grace, nor evidence of God's love to us, or of our love to God.

But you will say then: What is this love?

I answer briefly: It is a fruit of the spirit of God, an effect of faith, whereby believers being knit together by the strongest bonds of affection, upon the account of their interest in one head, Jesus Christ, and participating of one spirit, do delight in

in, value, and esteem each other, and are in a constant readiness for all those regular duties, whereby the temporal, spiritual, and eternal good of one another may be promoted.

I will a little open the description I have given of it, and so proceed.

1. This love, concerning which I speak, is a fruit of the spirit: *Gal. v. 22. The fruit of the spirit is love.* There may be, and is implanted in some natures, a great deal of love, kindness, and tenderness in comparison of others that are froward; but that is not the love here intended. That which renders it peculiarly Gospel love, is its being the product of the spirit of God in our hearts. Truly I cannot turn aside to every particular to shew how we may know whether love be a fruit of the spirit, or arising from our own natural inclination. But you must enquire into it upon those general rules that are given to discern and distinguish such things. This only I say, it is a fruit of the spirit, a product of the Holy Ghost in us, or it belongs not to our work.

2. It is an effect of faith. So faith the Apostle: *Faith worketh by love.* How doth faith work by love? How doth faith set love on work? When it respects God's command requiring this love, his promise accepting it, and his glory whereunto this love is directed; then doth faith work by love. And it is not the love we aim at, which we design and press upon you, if it proceed upon any other account but this, because Christ commands it, and promises to accept it, and because it lies in a tendency to his glory. Self may work by love sometimes; flesh, interest, or reputation may work by love, that is, by the fruit of it; but it is that love which faith worketh by, that we alone intend.

3. It is that love which doth knit together the hearts and souls of believers with entire affection one unto another. For the Apostle tells us, *Eph. iv. 16. speaking of that communion which the Church hath by love, The whole body is fitly joined together, and compact, by that which every joint and part supplieth.* Now we can supply nothing to one another but by love, and from thence issues delight and esteem. *All my delight, saith he, is in the saints, Psal. xvi. 2. and in them that excel in the earth.* And there is that valuation, that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren; that is, to be willing to expose ourselves to difficulties and dangers, our lives to hazard, yea to lay them down, if the edification of the Church so require. The martyrs of old did not lay down their lives for Christ personally only, but for Christ mystical; they not only laid them down in faith, but in love, love to the Church. The Apostle saith of all his afflictions, *I fill up the measure of the afflictions of Christ, for his body which is the Church.* He bore his afflictions out of love to the Church, as well as out of faith and love to Christ personally, that there might be no offence, scandal, or temptation befall the Church. That their faith might be confirmed and strengthened, was a great reason why the martyrs laid down their lives. And it should be so with us if we come to be called thereunto. This is that love which the Scripture speaks of, and not that careless, negligent, carnally influenced love which the world, I had almost said, nay, I will say it, which too many professors abound withal, and no more. And it was a task not for one sermon, but many discourses, to shew what are the duties that this love requires of us, and will put us upon; how it will influence all our walkings, direct us in all our ways, in our whole course and conversation, and all that we do.

It may be asked, seeing all believers are the objects of this love, how are we to exercise it towards them, since there are few of them we know, and are acquainted withal, and that we have a satisfaction in their state and condition, that they are such; few, that we know their occasions, straits, and necessities?

I answer:

(1.) The whole mystical body of Christ being the adequate object of Gospel love, of love in and by the Holy Ghost, is it indispensably required of us, that radically and habitually we have an equal love unto all believers, as such, unto all the disciples of Christ throughout the world. But this is accompanied with some limitations.

[1.] In the exercise of it, it will much answer the evidence that persons are interested in the mystical body of Christ. There are some whose vain opinions, and indeed corrupt practices, will exercise the most extensive charity to judge they belong unto the mystical body of Christ. Yet according unto our evidence, so is our love to be.

[2.] There may be degrees in our love, especially as to delight and valuation, according as we see more or less of the image of Jesus Christ upon any believer; the likeness and image of Christ being the formal reason of this love.

[3.] The exercise of love must be determined by occasions and opportunities. But with these three qualifications, a man may pronounce he is no believer who hath not habitually and radically a love to all the believers in the world, so as to be inwardly concerned in their good and evil, and to be influenced unto prayer, compassion, delight, and joy, according as their state and condition doth require.

(2.) There is required an inclination and readiness to all acts of love towards all believers, as opportunity shall be administered. If we turn away our face from our brother, and hide ourselves from him, how dwells the love of God in us? If there be a real love in any of us of this kind, let it be but heightened and advantaged by an opportunity, it will break through difficulties, through reasonings, pleas of flesh and blood, to the exercise of itself. As they that know any thing in this world, know that as the first great opposition of hell, the world, and corrupt nature, is against faith to God by Christ; so the next great opposition made against us, is against our love. If we do not understand this, we are unwise, and have not considered the various states and conditions of things in this world; and how every moment things are presented unto us with a tendency to the weakning of love upon one account or other. But

(3.) Our Lord Jesus Christ in infinite wisdom, tenderness, and condescension, hath provided us a safe, suitable, constant, immediate object for the exercise of this love. Having given so great a command as that of love, and laid so great weight upon it, he will not leave us at an uncertainty, how, or where, or when we shall exercise it; but hath directed us to a particular way wherein he will make a trial of our obedience unto the command in general; and this is, by his institution of particular Churches. There are two great ends why Christ did institute a particular Church, and they were to express the two great graces and duties that he requires of us.

[1.] The first end why Christ did institute a particular Church was, that his saints together might jointly profess their faith in him, and obedience to him. And we have no other way of doing it: he hath tied us up to this. A blessed way! You shall this way, faith he, jointly profess your faith in me, and obedience to me, or no way.

[2.] The next great end why he did institute a particular Church, was, that we might have a direct exercise of his other great command, and of that other great duty of love to believers. I will try you here, faith Christ, I require this of you indispensably, to love all the saints, all believers, all my disciples. You shall not need to say, you must go far, this way, or that for objects; I appoint you to such an order, as wherein you shall have continual, immediate objects of all that love which I require of you. When God gives commands that great things turn upon, and are general, he gives some particular instance wherein he will have our obedience tried to those commands. When he gave the great command at first in the state of innocency, he tried them in the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. The Lord Jesus Christ hath given us this great command of love, and hath plainly declared, that if we love not one another, we are not his disciples. I will give you an instance whereby you may be tried, faith he, cast you into such a society by my order and appointment, as wherein you may have immediate objects for the exercise of love, to the utmost of what I do require. If we find a person that is orderly admitted into Church-society, he is as certain and evident an object of our love, as if we saw him lying in the arms of Christ. We walk by rule; he hath appointed us to do so. Let none then pretend that they love the brethren in general, and love the people of God, and love the saints, while their love is not fervently exercised towards those who are in the same Church-society with them. Christ hath given it you for a trial: he will try your love at the last day by your deportment in that Church wherein you are. The Apostle tells us, *He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, will never love God whom he hath not seen.* I am sure I may say, he that exercises not love towards the brethren whom he doth see in that relation wherein Christ hath appointed him to exercise love, loves not the brethren whom he doth not see, and that he hath not that peculiar relation to, and acquaintance withal. The great Lord and guide of his Church binds it upon all our spirits and consciences;

consciences; it is our life, our being. I declare unto this congregation this day, I witness and testify unto you, that unless this evangelical love be found acted, not loosely and in general, but among ourselves mutually towards each other, we shall never give up our account with joy unto Jesus Christ, nor shall we ever carry on the great work of edification among ourselves. And if God be pleased but to give this spirit among you, I have nothing to fear but the mere weakness and pravity of my own heart and spirit. This is the great way Christ hath given us to exemplify our obedience unto that great and holy command of love to his disciples; and great weight is laid upon this duty.

II. The next thing I am to speak to, is to shew you the grounds why this love is so necessary: *Before all these things have love: I shew you a more excellent way, and that is love.* There would be no end if I should insist long upon the grounds and reasons of this duty. I will give you some of them that are of weight and importance unto me. Do but carry this along with you, that what I speak about love, is to be exercised first among ourselves, and then to have emanations upon all opportunities and occasions to the whole mystical body of Christ throughout the world.

I. It is necessary, because it is the great way whereby we can give testimony to the power of the Gospel, and our witness to the *Messiah*, the Christ that was sent of God. The great thing we have to do in the world, is to bear witness unto God's sending Christ into the world for the work for which he came. How shall we do this? He himself shews us, *John xvii. 21, 23. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* And again, *ver. 23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that thou hast sent me.* Jesus Christ lays the weight upon this, that the world may be convinced that God hath sent him. How shall this be evidenced? saith he, if all believers are one it will be evidenced. There is, I acknowledge, another principle of the oneness of them that believe, by a participation of that one spirit of the Father and the Son, whereby we come to be one in the Father and the Son. But that is not the whole oneness; nay I do not think it is at all the oneness here intended: and my reason is this, because it is perfectly invisible and imperceptible unto the world; and he prays for such an oneness as may convince the world, that the world may see that they are one, and so believe that God had sent him. It is no oneness but that whereof love is the bond of perfection, the life, and soul, and spirit of it, that will give conviction unto the world that God hath sent Christ. And if this be not eminent in us, we do what lies in us to harden the world in their unbelief. Persons that profess the Gospel, some way or other, have framed unity and uniformity to themselves, and neglecting this oneness of love under them, hath been the greatest means of hardning the world in unbelief. What great matter is there in this, saith the world? I can make such an union when I list; it is but making such and such laws about outward observations, and tie men to the observance of them. But the union of love no man can give but Jesus Christ. And why will this convince the world that God hath sent Christ when the disciples do so love one another? Where lies the argument? From what topick do you argue to prove God hath sent Christ, because his disciples do so love one another? It lies in this, as I told you before, when sin entred, the bond of all union and perfection among the creatures was quite broken by the loss of love; the whole world was irrecoverably cast under envy, wrath, *hateful, and hating one another.* Nothing under heaven, no means in us could retrieve men unto love again, to pure spiritual love. God sends Christ to retrieve this loss, to bring in a new creation, to bring things into order, to renew the world, and the face of things. That glorious part of the work wrought in the heart of man, is invisible; that which is visible is love. The world sees here a new union brought forth among Christ's disciples, such as is not in the world, nor of the world, such as the world doth not partake of; by this they know that God hath sent Christ to do this great work. The care, kindness, condescension, love, delight, and concernment we have in one another, as members of the mystical body of Christ, exemplified in our peculiar Church relation, is the great testimony we give to the world that God hath sent Christ, and they will be forced to see, or say at last, A glorious work is done upon these persons *that were foolish and disobedient, living in divers lusts and pleasures, hateful, and hating*

hating one another; a glorious work hath been done by the Son upon them, and we profess it is from Christ, from God's sending him for this end and purpose.

2. We have no evidence that we ourselves in particular are the disciples of Christ without it. *John xiii. 34, 35. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* I have a little enquired why this command of love is here and in other places called a new commandment. I told you before when sin entred into the world, envy and hatred entred with it, and it is continued upon the same account. *Whence come wars and fightings, saith the Apostle, is it not from your lusts that war in your members?* In the first revelation God gave of himself in the law, he commanded love. Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us so, that we are commanded to *love the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.* Whence then is this command so often called a new commandment? *A new commandment I give you, that ye love one another, saith he.*

There are divers reasons of it.

(1.) I judge one may be this, That under the law God did indulge that carnal people in sundry things wherein they came short of the royal law of love, by reason of the hardness of their hearts. When Christ comes and gives this command in its full extent, it was a new command. Again,

(2.) They were carnal, and did not see the spirituality of the command. And the truth of it is, you hear so little of it in the Old Testament, and so much of it in the New, that Christ may justly call it a new command. Besides,

(3.) At the time when he came, there were cursed expositions of the law that went current in the whole Church, which had overthrown the whole duty of love between the brethren and members of it; as you may see in our Saviour's vindicating of it, *Mat. v.* But Christ coming to take off all indulgence to carnal men, by reason of the hardness of their hearts, and to take away the darkness that was upon their minds, whereby they could not see the spirituality of the command, and to remove those false expositions that were put upon the law corrupting the command; he calls it a new commandment.

(4.) Above all these, there is one reason more for it, which lies here in the words I before read unto you: *A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you love one another.* The reason why it was a new commandment was, because there was no quickning, enlivening example of it, to express the power of love, under the Old Testament. This was reserved for Christ. He comes and gives that glorious instance of love in his condescension in all that he did, and in all that he suffered. He shews that there was something in love that they never before had an instance of in the world. Whence the command for love lies thus: *Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus: That you love one another, as I have loved you.* And then it is a new commandment indeed which it was not before. *Hereby, saith he, men shall know that ye are my disciples; if the great example I have set you, the great command I have given you, and the great work I came into the world about, was to renew love; by love men will know that ye are my disciples, and not else.* We have no other way to evidence ourselves to be disciples of Christ. Mens parts, gifts, wisdom, will not do it; if there be no love, the world has no reason to conclude that we are the disciples of Jesus Christ.

3. It is that wherein the communion of saints doth principally consist. There is great talk about communion of saints, and certainly it is a great thing. We may observe it had a place in all the ancient creeds of the Church: where they profess to believe in God, in Christ, and in the Holy Ghost, they profess also to believe the communion of saints, which shews it to be a thing of great importance.

Wherein doth it consist? There are three things in it: (1.) The fountain and spring of it: (2.) The profession and explanation of it: (3.) The formal reason and life of it.

(1.) The fountain and spring of the communion of saints lies in their common participation of one spirit from the one head Jesus Christ. And you may as soon form a good society among dead men, as work a communion among professors, where it is not fundamentally laid in a common participation of the same spirit with the head Christ.

(2.) This

(2.) This communion is expressed principally in the participation of the same ordinances in the same Church. This is the great expression of the communion of saints.

(3.) The life and formal reason of this communion, which derives strength from the fountain, and communicates it into that expression and profession, lies in love.

Truly I have a little jealousy upon my spirit, that Churches have been apt to place their communion too much, if not solely, in the participation of the same ordinances, depending upon the same pastor and teacher, joining together in the celebration of the same sacred institutions. Friends, this is but the expression of our communion, and it may be without any real communion. There may be a communication in the same ordinances, without any communion of saints; you know it is too much in the world. If we be not acted and influenced by this love in all we do, there is no communion. So far you are faithful unto your station in the Church of God, so far you discharge your duty, and act as living members of the Church, as you find love acting in you towards one another, and no farther. Your utmost diligence in attending unto order, your constant attendance at the celebration of ordinances, your dependance on the doctrine and instructions afforded in the Church, may all be without the communion of saints. When you have all this, it is love makes this communion, that is the life and formal reason of it; as you may see in the place before quoted, *Eph. iv. 15, 16. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together, compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh encrease of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.* It is the greatest and most glorious description of the communion of saints, that we have in the Scripture. It begins in love; *Speaking the truth in love*: And it ends in love; *Edifying itself in love*: And it is also carried on by love. There is the fountain and spring of this communion, that lies in the *head*, in our relation unto, and dependance upon *Christ the head*. If we hold not the head, we can have no interest in this communion. But it is not enough there be an head, there must be *a growing up into him in all things who is the head*. We shall never carry on the work of communion, unless we grow up into Christ, by express dependance on him, deriving life and strength from him, and returning all unto his praise and glory as our head, being thereby brought nearer, and made more like unto him. The exercise of faith in these things, is our growing up into Christ. Suppose then we go thus far in the business of communion; we hold the head by faith; and by the exercise of faith and obedience grow up into the head; What is next? *From whom the whole body is fitly framed together.* There will be such supplies from the head Christ, being thus held and grown up into, as will communicate such variety of gifts and graces as shall suit the body, and every member one to another. But how are believers cast into Church-union and order? I will not say how they are not: I know what attempts there are in the world. I will plainly tell you how they are. It is by the various communications of Christ the head unto them all, fitting and suiting them to one another. What do they then themselves herein? They are of two sorts, either joints, or other parts. May be they are joints, that is, either officers, or principal members, who by reason of their gifts, yield a supply to the communication of the effects of those gifts and graces they have received, carrying on farther this supply that is received from the head. What shall become of the other members? Not only the joints, but every part doth so, according to the measure of each. The graces and gifts of Christ cast every member into what part it bears. Let none of us choose our own part in the house of God. The graces and gifts of Christ cast us into each part, or joint, and from thence do we supply, according to the measure of that part; and no more is required of us. But how shall we do this? Why, saith he, *ἀληθεύοντες ἑν ἀγάπῃ, Speaking the truth in love.* The plain meaning of which is, That whatever we do in declaring, or obeying the truth; in preaching, or in a way of duty, we do it all in love. It is not merely speaking, or declaring, but it is a doing whatever we do in obedience to the truth. Whatever your concern is in the truths of the Gospel, let love be acted in it; and that is the means whereby you convey your supplies from every joint and part unto the whole. Truth requires our pity, compassion, admonition, exhortation, forbearance, and the like; do it all in love, saith he. How then? *The body will be*

encreased, and edify itself in love. It is all love. I have sometimes thought that *in ἀγάπῃ, in love,* may be taken for *διὰ ἀγάπης, by love: Shall edify itself by love.* But take it as we have rendred it: *Edify itself in love;* that is, love in the body shall be encreased, and where love is encreased, there the body is edified. A Church full of love, is a Church well built up. I had rather see a Church filled with love a thousand times, than filled with the best, the highest, and most glorious gifts and parts that any men in this world may be made partakers of. Could they go beyond and exceed all we aim at or desire; could they *speak with the tongues of men and angels;* it is ten thousand times more for the glory of God, and our own comfort, to be a company of poor saints, who are filled with love, than with those of the highest attainments, without it. We neither give testimony unto the world that God sent Christ, nor evidence that we are his disciples, nor do we contribute any thing to the edification of the Church, unless God give us to act this grace of love in an abundant measure. Whatever our gifts and parts are, and whatever our wisdom is, such things are apt to puff us up, if this love abound not in us; we shall be thorns in the sides of one another, and shall contribute nothing unto the real, spiritual edification of the Church. The Apostle hath not only laid this down, but so disputed it in the 12 and 13 chapters of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, that I shall not insist upon it. *Though I could, says he, speak with the tongue of men and angels, yet if I have not love, I am but as sounding brass, and as a tinkling cymbal,* that make a little pleasant noise that comes to nothing. I would wind up all arguments with this; If we have not love, we have no grace. He that loves him that begets, will love them that are begotten. If we love not the brethren, the love of God doth not dwell in us. It is not our outward order and form, nor our duties, nor any thing we do, or can do, will evidence that we have any thing of the grace of God in us, if we want this grace of love.

III. Having spoken thus far of the nature of evangelical love, and of the reasons of its importance, I would willingly say something to press it upon your hearts and mine own.

The whole issue of this day's work which you have called us unto, under the care and kindness of Christ, depends wholly upon this one instance of our discharging ourselves in this one duty of love. I know not how it comes to pass, but so it is, that professors have of late been wonderfully harrass'd with sharp invectives, and bitter rebukes for their want of love; and yet I cannot observe there is any fruit of it, or any advantage made by it. And the reason of it seems to be, because all those invectives have been managed upon this principle; If you will do so and so, if you will come up to such and such practices in things of religion, if you will go thus far, and thus far, if you will leave off these and those institutions and ways wherein ye walk; then you have love; if not, you have none at all. And what hath been the fruit hereof? New divisions, new animosities, new rendings and tearings, without the least appearance of any improvement of love whatsoever. I should be very sorry that any man living should outgo me in desires, that all that fear God throughout the world, especially in these nations, were of one way as well as of one heart. I know I desire it sincerely; but I do verily believe, that when God shall accomplish it, it will be the effect of love, and not the cause of love. It will proceed from love, before it brings forth love. There is not a greater vanity in the world, in my weak apprehensions, than to drive men into such and such a way, and then suppose that love will be the necessary consequence of that way; to think that if by sharp rebukes, by cutting, bitter expressions, they can but drive men into such and such practices, that then love will certainly ensue. We see the contrary all the world over, that those who do most boast and glory in bringing all to uniformity of practice, have least love among them. You may see it in the papal Church, they have obtained their end in driving all into an uniformity in practice, and yet the members of it are fighting with, and tearing one another. It is a vain supposition to think to bring men to such a way, whether they will or no, and then to love whether they will or no. I know not truly any way that any who fear God do walk in, though some are nearer the truth than others, which in itself is an obstruction of love. I profess if I did, I would fly from that way, as from a pest-house, or any thing that was mortally destructive; because I know the end of all Christ's institutions is to encrease love. Some may be nearer the truth than others, some are so, but if any way doth really in itself obstruct

fruct love, without farther consideration, without debating whether it was right or wrong, I would leave that way, for I know it is false. But for persons to reflect upon any institutions of Christ, such as particular Churches are, and will be proved to be, as though they were hindrances of love, argues a great unskilfulness in the ways of God, if not ill will towards them. Nay, they are appointed of Christ for this end, that we may first exercise that love which he commands immediately towards one another, that so we may learn to exercise it towards all believers throughout the world. Pray let not us be overtaken with any such apprehension that we cannot exercise love, 'till we come to such and such a way of agreement, and so put off the duty 'till we have no opportunity or ability to exercise it; but let us address ourselves to it in our present state and condition.

I shall close all with two or three cautions against things that may be hindrances in the diligent practice of this great duty I have been speaking of unto you.

1. Let us take heed of a morose, sour, natural disposition. If it doth not hinder many fruits of love, yet it sullies the glory of its exercise extremely. Some good persons have so much of *Nabal* in them, that blasts the sweet fruit of love which comes from them; it is soured with something of an ill disposition, that hath no life or beauty in it. † It is a great mistake to believe that grace only subdues our carnal corruption, and doth not change our natural temper. I believe grace changes the natural temper, and enobles it; it makes *the leopard to lie down with the kid*, and *the bear to eat straw with the ox*, as it is promised; it makes the froward, meek; the passionate, patient; and the morose, benign and kind. And we are to apply grace to these ends and purposes; and not to humour and please ourselves, as though such things are our natural disposition. Grace comes to alter our natural dispositions, that are unsuited to love, and indispose us for it. We are apt to excuse ourselves and one another, and hope that Christ will do so too, because this or that is much from our natural temper. Pray let us not act thus; our natural tempers are to be cured by grace, or it hath not its perfect work upon us.

2. Take heed of such hindrances of love, as may attend your peculiar state and condition. I would speak to them who have the advantage of riches, wealth, honour, reputation in the world, which encompass them with so many circumstances, that they know not how to break through them to that familiarity of love with the meanest member of the Church, which is required of them. Brethren, know the Gospel leaves all your providential advantages entirely unto you, whatever you have by birth, education, inheritance, estate, titles, places, it leaves the entire enjoyment of them. But in things which purely concern your communion together, the Gospel lays all level; there is neither rich nor poor, free nor bond in Christ, but the new creature. Therefore we are so expressly commanded by the Apostle *James*, chap. ii. that we should have no particular respect in the congregation to persons upon the account of outward advantages. We all serve one common Master, the same Lord; and he is such a Lord, that when he was rich in all the glory of heaven, he became poor for our sakes. And let me beg of you that are rich, to remember this common Lord and Master; and let not your outward advantages therefore keep you at a distance from the meanest, the poorest saint that belongs unto the congregation. If they do, your riches are your temptation, and your place a disadvantage, which you must labour to break through.

Something also might be said to the poorest and lowest sort, who have their temptations too to keep them off from the exercise of love. But I shall wave it.

3. Lastly, Take heed of satisfying yourselves, all of you, with the duties of love, without looking after the entire working of the grace of love. You here that are joined with us this day, have had for a long time so great a light and instructor, that I doubt not but you are acquainted with all the duties of love that are required of you in your special relations wherein you stand, and that you have been found in the practice of them. I only mind you to take heed, that you be spirited with the grace of love; that which proceeds from faith, and is acted in you by the Holy Ghost; that which gives you delight in, and a dear esteem and valuation of the saints; and creates a cheerfulness and readiness in you for the performance of all these duties.

I thought to have given you many other directions; but I must conclude. If God be pleased to imprint any thing from this word upon our hearts and spirits, we shall have cause to rejoice in it. However remember thus much, that you were begged
and

and entreated; as you regard the glory of God, the honour of the Gospel, and the edification of this Church, (which of two is now become one) concerning which you must all in your places give an account, as well as I in mine; and as you have any respect unto the ministry of him whom God hath set over you, that all is wound up in this one duty of love; which if God please to encrease, and make intense among us, I no way doubt but he will prosper this day's work of our union.

* S E R M O N XXVI.

The Christian's Work of dying daily.

I COR. XV. 31.

I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

TH E S E words have a great vehemency and emphasis in them, and discover an uncommon earnestness upon the spirit of the Apostle when he wrote them: and indeed they carry a greater appearance of such a vehemency in the original, than in our translation. For the words we put in the last place, *I die daily*, are the first in the original: Καὶ ἡμετέραν ἀποθνήσκω, *I die daily*: ὑπὸ τῆς χαίτης, *in your rejoicing*. Ἰνα ἡμετέραν ἀποθνήσκω, *I die daily, that I may have your rejoicing*. *I die daily, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord.* And there is no expression used by the Apostle, that hath a greater ardor of spirit in it than this hath.

The special reason of using it in this place, is to evidence the stability of his faith about the resurrection of the dead. That, you know, is the dispute he is upon. And he proves here, that it was not an opinion that he had, but a firm rooted faith that carried him through all difficulties and sufferings. *Why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die.* I do evidence my faith, saith he, of the resurrection, by my readiness to suffer all things in the confirmation of the truth of it. And it is the great duty of ministers to be ready at all times to evidence the stability of their own faith in the things which they preach to others, by a cheerful suffering for them.

There are two things in the words: An assertion; and the confirmation of it. The assertion is this: *I die daily.* The confirmation of it: *I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

There are two or three difficulties in these words. I shall very little trouble you with conjectures, but give you what I think the sense of the Holy Ghost in them.

The one is from the ambiguous signification of the word χαίτης, which we render here, *rejoicing*. But in other places it is rendred, sometimes by *confidence*, sometimes by *boasting*, and sometimes by *glorying*. *Gloriation* is the word I would use, if our language would bear it. *And by your gloriation*, which is an exultation of joy.

This Sermon was preached Sept. 26, 1680.

There

There is another difficulty in the transposition of the words, such as is not in Scripture again. *I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus.* This hath afforded variety of conjectures unto many. But plainly the sense of it is this: *By the rejoicing which you and I have in the Lord.* And I could give instances of the like trajections in the Greek tongue, from one person to another, if it were to your edification.

There is yet a third difficulty. The particle *in* here is a note of an oath, or swearing; as much as *in* in the Hebrew tongue, or in our language, *by*: yet sometimes it is used as a note of a strong asseveration. And we have chosen to express it by a middle word, *I protest.* If it be a note of an oath, then the word is used to denote the object: *I swear by your rejoicing in the Lord*; that is, *By the Lord in whom you rejoice.* As it is said expressly, *Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac*; that is, *by him whom his father Isaac feared.* But I rather take it here as a note only of vehement asseveration. And so, says he, *it is as true, as that you and I do glory in Christ, and rejoice in him; I die daily.*

It may have a double sense: I am every day, by reason of preaching the Gospel, exposed to dangers and death. For he doth speak both before and after of the dangers he underwent in the work of preaching the Gospel: *I die daily*: Or, *I die daily*, by continually preparing myself to die; I am always in a preparation to die; through the faith of the resurrection I am always prepared to die chearfully and comfortably, according to the will of God. And this is the sense I shall fix upon. And it being in a necessary duty, I may raise a general rule from a special instance in this example of the Apostle.

Obf. *It is the duty of all believers to be preparing themselves every day to die chearfully, comfortably, and, if it may be, triumphing in the Lord.*

Observe only this, that there may be a dying safely, where there is not a dying chearfully and comfortably. Every believer, whoever he be, shall die safely; but we see many believers do not die chearfully and comfortably. I do not speak of the first, how all persons may come to die safely; but of the latter, how believers may die comfortably and chearfully.

And there are two ways of dying chearfully and comfortably.

1. The one is in outward expressions, to the comfort of them that are about us. This depends much on the nature of the distemper whereof men may die, which may oppress the animal spirits, and cloud the mind; and therefore it falls not under rule, but is left to the providence of God.

2. But there is also a dying chearfully and comfortably in persons own souls, which it may be in their dying moments they cannot manifest, when they are thoroughly prepared for it.

Truly, brethren, all I can say, is, that I am speaking to you of the things which I have considered upon my own account, before ever I thought of considering them upon yours; and I cannot declare unto you what I have attained, which may be little or nothing; but only what I have aimed at, if it may be of use to us in this dying time, especially among good ministers, one or another almost every day.

I shall mention three things that in my judgment are requisite unto every believer who would die chearfully, and come in a fit and full season into the presence of God.

1. The constant exercise of faith, as to the resignation of a departing soul into the hand and sovereign will of God. *I die daily.* How? Exercising faith constantly in the resignation of a departing soul, when the time comes, unto the sovereign grace, good pleasure, power, and faithfulness of God. The soul is now taking its leave of all its concerns in this world; all that it sees, all that it knows by its senses, all its relations, every thing it hath been acquainted withal, to have an eternal, absolute unconcern in them. It is entering into an invisible world, whereof it knows nothing but what it hath by faith. When *Paul* was taken up into the third heaven, *2 Cor. xii. 4.* we should have been glad to have heard some tidings from the invisible world, how things were there. He saw nothing, only he heard words. Why, blessed *Paul*, may we not hear those words? No, *they are not lawful to be uttered*, saith he. God will not have us know any thing in the invisible world, but what is revealed in the word, while we are here. Therefore the souls of them departed, who have died and liv'd again, as the soul of *Lazarus*, I doubt not but God supported in their

being, but restrained all their operations. For if a separate soul had one natural, intuitive view of God, it would be the greatest misery in the world to send it back into a dying body. God will keep those things to be objects of faith. *Lazarus* could tell nothing of what was done in heaven; his soul was kept in its being, but all its operations were restrained. I bless God, I have peculiarly exercised my thoughts, according to the conduct of the word, about the invisible world, whereof in due time you may hear something; but in the mean time, I know we have no notion of it, but what is by pure revelation.

Whither now is the soul going? What will be the issue within a few moments? Is it annihilated? Doth death not only separate the body and soul, but destroy our being, so that we shall be no more to eternity? So some would have it, for it is their interest it should be so. Is the soul going into a state of wandering in the air, under the influence of more powerful spirits? Which was the opinion of the old pagan world, as that which caused appearances of the dead so frequently upon the earth.

And this persuasion was taken into purgatory by the *Papists*; from whence they concluded that there were great appearances of them that were departed continually. And you have a thousand stories of them, which we know to be all the actings and deceits of evil spirits. And such is our darkness as to the invisible world, that the greatest part of Christians have feigned a third state that is not in it, but the fruit of superstition and idolatry. For this is superstition, to invent things in religion, suited to mens natural affections, or to gratify their lusts for their own profit; both which were designed in this case. For when persons thought the souls of men that were gone into an eternal condition, were lost, and that for ever; no, there is another venture for them, say they; and so they pacified them, that if they were the worst of men, yet there might be hope for them after death. Nor has it a less tendency to gratify men in their lusts, and encourage them to live at their pleasure. And the whole of this they turn to their own profit who invented it. This, by the way, only to manifest the darkness that mankind is in, as to this invisible world. To proceed therefore:

Doth the soul go into a state wherein it is capable of no joy, no consolation? Brethren, let men pretend what they will, he that never received any joy or consolation in this world, but by his senses, or his reason exercised about the object of his senses, doth not know, nor can believe the soul itself should be capable of any consolation in another world. He alone who hath received immediately into his soul spiritual comfort in this world, can believe that his soul is capable of it in another. But however this is certain, no man can undertake any thing about the conduct of his soul in another world.

What is your way then in this state and condition? What is your wisdom? Truly to resign this departing soul unto the sovereign wisdom, pleasure, faithfulness, and power of God, which is the duty we have in hand by the continual exercise of faith. So the Apostle tells us, *2 Tim. i. 12. For I know, saith he, whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* It is a mighty thing to keep a separate soul to the day of the resurrection. Why, saith the Apostle, *I know whom I have trusted with it; I trust it with Almighty Power.* The Lord help us to believe that there shall be an act of Almighty Power put forth in the behalf of these poor souls of ours, when departed into the invisible world, to keep them to that day when body and soul shall be united, and come to enjoy God.

We have a glorious example for this duty and exercise of faith. Our Lord Jesus Christ died in the exercise of it. It was the last act of faith Christ put forth in this world, *Luke xxiii. 46. When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, (this was the voice of nature, but now he comes to the words of faith) he said, Father into thy hands I commit my spirit; (my departing soul) and when he had thus said, he gave up the ghost.* Here was the last exercise of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in this world, the committing of his departing soul into the hands of God. And to what end did he do it? We are told, *Psal. xvi. 8. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved; therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption; thou wilt shew me the path*

path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. They are the words of David, which our Lord Jesus Christ made use of himself, when he said: *Into thy hands I commit my spirit.* And the Psalmist adds: *Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth,* Psal. xxxi. 5. An experience of the work of redemption communicated to us by the truth of the promise is the greatest encouragement to commend a departing soul into the hands of God.

This to me now, (considering the vanishing of all these shadows and appearances, and the eternal dissolution of all relation to things below, and the subsisting of a soul in a separate condition, which we are not acquainted withal) is one of the first things we have to consider, if we will die chearfully and comfortably; namely, how we can resign a departing soul into the hand and sovereign disposal of God.

It is both a great and eminent act of faith, and it is the last victorious act of faith so to do.

1. It is a great and eminent act of faith, *Heb. xi.* where the mighty efficacy and great success of faith is spoken of. One of the particulars, and that wherein many of the rest did center, is, *These all died in faith.* It was a great thing to die in faith under the Old Testament, when they were encompassed with so many shadows, and so much darkness, and when their view into things invisible within the veil, was exceeding much beneath what God hath communicated unto us. Nay, the state of things within the veil was not the same then as now; there was not Christ upon the throne, administering his office. Notwithstanding faith carried them through all this darkness, and caused them to make a believing venture of their souls upon God, his faithfulness, mercy, and grace.

When it comes to this consideration, it lays all things in the balance: in the one scale, our being, our walking, and life in this world; our sins, and their guilt, our fears, uncertainties, and darkness about a future state, our abhorrence of a dissolution, the consideration of all things that are round about us; in the other, the power, faithfulness, and mercy of God, and his ability to receive, preserve, and keep us to that day, and to be better to us than all these things. Here shall be my portion, faith faith; all things in the other scale are of no value, of no weight to this exceeding weight of power and goodness of God: this is a glorious exercise of faith. Have you tried it, my brethren? Lay things on the one side and the other in the balance, and see which way the scale will draw, what faith will do in such a case.

2. It is the last victorious act of faith, wherein it hath its final conquest over all its adversaries. Faith is the leading grace in all our spiritual warfare and conflict; but all along while we live, it hath faithful company that adheres to it, and helps it. Love works, and hope works, and all other graces, self-denial, readiness to the cross, they all work and help faith. But when we come to die, faith is left alone. Now try what faith will do. The exercise of other graces cease, only faith comes to a close conflict with its last adversary, wherein the whole is to be tried. And by this one act of resigning all into the hand of God, faith triumphs over death, and cries, *O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!* Come give me an inlet into immortality and glory, the everlasting hand of God is ready to receive me. This is the victory whereby we overcome all our spiritual enemies.

I thought to have made some use of what hath been said: to examine whether we do live in the exercise of this grace, or no, and what benefit we have thereby. And I should have touched especially upon this one thing, this alone will keep us from all surprisal of death. Not to be surprized with any thing is the substance of humane wisdom: not to be surprized with death is a great part of the substance of our spiritual wisdom.

S E R M O N

* SERMON XXVII.

I MADE an entrance upon this portion of Scripture the last Lord's day. And I judged the subject very suitable, because of the warnings God hath variously given us to be exercising ourselves unto this duty. God hath since encreased the seasonableness, by taking away a great and eminent servant of his from among us; concerning whom, I will say this one word, and no more.

As far as I know by thirty years acquaintance and friendship, and half that time in Church-fellowship, it may be the age wherein he lived did not produce many more wise, more holy, more useful than he in his station, if any. And so I leave him at rest with God.

I proposed to insist upon those things which are necessary for us, to obtain a peaceable and comfortable departure out of this world. And I have spoken to one head, which was the daily exercise of faith in the resignation of a departing soul to the sovereign power and will of God, to be treated and entertained by him according to the tenor of the covenant of grace.

I will not leave this point 'till I have made some use of it. And I shall take no other measure of my time, but the strength God is pleased to give me.

Use 1. It may be worth our while to enquire into the especial nature of this duty which we are exhorted unto; for we may every day more and more understand the weakness of many, who think, it may be, they know something of it, when they know not what it means. We may therefore consider three things in it. (1.) What is the special and immediate object of this exercise of faith. (2.) What is the form or special nature of it. And (3.) What is the way and manner of its performance.

(1.) As to the special and immediate object of this exercise of faith, and which must take with it a special motive, that, I say, is God, under the consideration of his sovereignty, power, and faithfulness; and this upon the motive of some experience of his kindness and grace. So speaks the *Psalmist*, *Psal. xxxi. 5. Into thy hand I commit my spirit.* What was it that gave him confidence so to do? *Thou hast redeemed me*, saith he, *O Lord God of truth.* A sense of redeeming grace, convey'd by the truth of the promises, is required in all that would commit their spirits into the hand of God. And therefore, brethren, when you come to the exercise of this great duty, you must lay this foundation, in some sense and experience of the grace and kindness of God, or you can never perform it in a due manner. And

[1.] Upon this motive, the first thing we consider in God, in the resignation of our souls to him, is his sovereignty. It is mentioned in two places in the *Psalms*, in both which this duty is proposed unto us: *Psal. xvi. 1, 2. Preserve me, O God, for in thee do I put my trust.* O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, (thou hast said unto Jehovah) *thou art my Lord.* He doth not use the word יהוה again, but אדני, *Thou art my Lord*, אדני אלהי, who hast the sovereign disposal of me: I am going to give up my spirit to thee, and I do it upon the consideration of thy sovereignty, that *thou art my Lord.* So *Psal. xxxi. 14, 15. I trusted in thee, O Lord.* Why so? *I said, thou art my God, my times are in thy hand.* It is because of thy sovereignty: *Thou art my God*, who has the sovereign disposal of me, therefore I commit myself to thee. It follows those words: *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.* Faith regards the glorious sovereignty of God, as the absolute free dis-

poser of all things here, and unto eternity, without any reserve but his own pleasure, when it makes this resignation of the soul unto him.

[2.] It hath a peculiar respect unto the power of God: *2 Tim. i. 12. I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.* It is common for persons to go through it in a customary manner, die they must; but there is nothing can encourage them to yield up their souls to God, but an apprehension of such an infinite power that is able to preserve them in eternal being in the invisible world; especially to the day of the resurrection.

[3.] It respects the faithfulness of God, as one who hath promised that he will take care of us when we are gone out of this world. *1 Pet. iv. 19. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator;* that is, as a God who is omnipotent, who made all things, and disposeth of all things, and is faithful in the accomplishing of his promises.

So then this duty I exhort unto, is an immediate address unto God, an exercise of faith upon him, with special respect unto his sovereignty, power, and faithfulness, upon an experience we have in some measure, of his goodness and grace.

The seat before my eyes is very much changed in a short time, and I know not, brethren, how soon it may be the lot of any of you to stand in need of understanding this thing, and bringing it into practice. You may, if you please, remember it, for it is of great importance to have immediate converse with God, with respect unto those great and awful attributes of his sovereignty, power, and faithfulness. That is the first thing.

(2.) As to the special form of this duty, there are two words wherein it is expressed, and both of the same import; for in one place it is rendred, *commending*, in another, *committing*, *Psal. xxxi. 5.* and *Luke xxiii. 46.* But it is a *recommending* or *committing*, as men commit a trust. If a man lay a dying, and had an only child, and an estate to leave him; with what solemnity would he commit him to the trust of his friend, to take care of him? I commit this poor child, who is helpless and fatherless, I commit him to your trust, faith he, to your love, care, and power to look after him. He doth it with great solemnity. The *Psalmist* calls his soul, *his darling*, and *only one*: *Deliver my darling from the dog, and my only one.* And now when a person is about to leave this world, he is to commit his soul, and leave it in trust somewhere. Then this exercise of faith, is a leaving in trust, or committing our *darling*, our *only one*, that is departing out of this tabernacle, unto God, under the consideration of his sovereignty, power, and faithfulness. I do not yet speak unto the life of this duty, which consists in committing the trust of our souls unto God, to be dealt withal, not according to our choice, but according to the terms of the covenant of grace, let it fall where it will, to all eternity; that is the solemn committing.

(3.) As to the manner of it, it ought to be done expressly in words that we should say to God. I do not give instructions to them who are dying, but to them that live, that they may be prepared to die. We should say to God, Lord, I have been thus long in this world, I have seen much variety in the outward dispensation of things in the world, but a thousand times more in the inward frame of my spirit, and I am now leaving the world upon thy call; I am to be here no more: O Lord, after all, being to enter into a new, eternal state, I commit my soul unto thee, I leave it with thee, I put all my trust and confidence in thy faithfulness, power, and sovereignty, to be dealt withal according to the terms of the covenant of grace; now I can lie down in peace.

Use 2. What benefit shall we receive hereby, if we do thus exercise our souls? I answer, We shall receive these advantages:

(1.) I know nothing that is more meet to keep our souls in a constant reverence of God, which is the very life and soul of holiness and obedience. And the best profession where this is not, is of no value. Now nothing is more suited to this, than an immediate access unto God every day, frequently at least, under the consideration of his glorious sovereignty, power, and faithfulness, as if you were immediately going into his presence, and into his hands. The more you abound in it, the greater will your reverence of God be. We have deceitful hearts, and a very crafty adversary to deal

deal withal. We are commanded to draw nigh, and to have our access unto God with boldness, *Heb. x. To come boldly to the throne of grace*, *Heb. iv. 16*. And we should do it frequently. Now nothing in this world is so suited to take off reverence, as boldness, and frequency. Where men make bold, and where they frequent, as in a multitude of duties many are bold and frequent, it works off the reverence of God. That is carnal boldness. But the more frequently you make your accesses unto God with spiritual boldness, the more will your hearts be filled with a reverence of God continually. And the more frequently you make your approaches unto God in outward duties without this holy and humble reverence; whatever your gifts be, reverence of God will decay. What poor, slight, withering things have I seen some men grow to be, under a fair outward conversation, and multiplication of duties? And you may take this measure with you in all your duties; if they encrease a reverence of God, they are from grace; if they do not, they are from gifts, and no way sanctify the soul wherein they are.

(2.) It will support us under all our sufferings. The soul that is accustomed to this exercise of faith, will not be greatly moved in any of its sufferings. The Lord knows we are all moved and shaken, and ready to be so sometimes very unhand-somely and unduly, as the leaves of the forest; but it will keep us from being greatly moved. *I shall not be greatly moved*, saith the *Psalmist*. And elsewhere it is enjoined: *Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to God, as unto a faithful Creator*: this will support you under all your sufferings. It is the very case and state in *Psal. xxxv.* from whence I have taken my principal testimony. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble, mine eye is consumed with grief, yea my soul and my belly; my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed, &c. for I have heard the slander of many, fear was on every side, while they took counsel together against me; they devised to take away my life.* What course doth he then take in all these distresses, sufferings, and persecutions? Why, saith he, *I said, thou art my God, my times are in thy hands*. He makes a resignation of himself to the sovereignty of God, and so was at peace.

I have shewed you now, how you may exercise this duty; and I do reckon myself to be near my account, and speak as one that is sensible of it; would I could prevail with you to bring it more or less into actual exercise, before you give rest to your eyes, or slumber to your eye-lids.

Use 3. In the next place, who are they that do or can perform this duty as they ought, to live in this exercise of faith?

I am certain that they do not do so, who live as if they were to live here forever. But this is an evident proof of that distemper and confusion which is come upon the mind and soul of man. Truly if a man of sobriety and reputation did come to such kind of men, who live in their sensuality and wickedness, as the world is full of them, and tell them, sirs! What do you do? I am persuaded that there is a death to come, and an eternal state of blessedness, or woe, near approaching. The way wherein you are will certainly ingulph you in eternal destruction. They would say to him, This is your opinion; yet one would think a wise man should prevail with them, to do something according to his opinion. But it is not so. They have convictions in their minds, that they must die; they will not only say, it is mine, or your opinion, but they themselves are convinced of a future state, and profess it. But will they do any thing from an influence of this conviction? Nothing at all, no more than if they were brute beasts. These are not able to come to the exercise of this duty.

Nor those who walk at all peradventure. They know they must die; but they are apt to think they have other things to do before they die; and that it will be time enough hereafter, at one season or another, to be preparing to die. The Apostle did *die daily* indeed; but they have something else to do. When death knocks at their neighbour's door, and they hear such an one is dead; and it comes to their own families, and takes away this or that person, then they have some thoughts for a little while, but they quickly wear off, and they return to their common frame of spirit again. *Yet a little more slumber, a little more sleep, a little more folding of the arms to sleep*, a little more secure converse in the world, attending unto our affairs; but death will come as an armed man, and they shall not be able to escape.

There

There are therefore two things required of every one that would be found in the exercise of this duty.

(1.) That he lay the foundation of it in some comfortable persuasion of an interest in Christ, which alone will enable him to die safely; and having obtained that, he may labour after that which will enable him to die comfortably and chearfully. Some men die safely, but upon many considerations, not now to be mentioned, they do not appear to die comfortably. And some men die very comfortably to all outward appearance, that do not die safely. This therefore is necessary, that there be this foundation laid, some comfortable persuasion of our interest in Christ, that we may die safely, or else it is to no purpose to expect to die comfortably.

(2.) Many think at last, a few words will do it, and there is an end; but let me assure you, not only upon principles of Scripture truth, but of nature, there is no man can do it, that hath not a view into the glory of spiritual and eternal things, outbalancing all his soul parts withal in this world. I hear men willing to die, and I find others do, but it is to go contrary to the principles of nature. No man under heaven (it implies a contradiction) can part with that which appears good to him, unless it be upon motives of a greater good; he must part with it, but he cannot willingly and chearfully part with it. If you would be thus able willingly and chearfully to resign a departing soul unto God, labour to have a view of those better things which are infinitely more great and glorious, which your souls shall come to the enjoyment of upon this departure.

The calls of God are great upon us, both publick and private, and special to this congregation; God expects a special compliance with his calls from us, or else we shall yet be exercised with farther tokens of his displeasure.

* S E R M O N XXVIII.

THAT which I have been treating upon from these words, is to declare the ways and duties whereby a believer may come to die, not only safely, which all believers shall; but also chearfully and comfortably, so as to have a free and abundant entrance into the kingdom of God in glory.

I have spoken but to one thing, which is the exercise of faith in the resignation of a departing soul, entring into the invisible world, into the sovereign hand and pleasure of God, to be disposed of according to the tenour of the everlasting covenant.

There are two things yet remaining, necessary to the same end, at least I find them so; which (if God will) I shall dispatch at this time.

II. There is required unto this great end, a readiness and willingness to part with this body which we carry about us, and to lay it down in the dust. The soul's natural averfation to let go this body, is that which we call an unwillingness to die; that hath made some say, like him of old, *Mori nolo*, &c. *I can be content to be dead, but I would not die.*

There are two reasons why the soul hath a natural unwillingness to part with the body.

1. Because it is, and hath been ever since it had a being, the only instrument of all the operations, and actings of its faculties and powers. The whole privilege of a being consists in its powers and acts. Now from the first moment of its being,

the soul hath had no instrument to act by, but the body, and that not only in the outward actions that the body performs, but in all its internal, rational actions, it cannot act without the instrumentality of the body. Therefore we know a hurt in the body, as oftentimes in the head, hath utterly deprived the soul of the exercise of all its powers and faculties during life. It cannot act rational, internal actions but by the body; and how it can act without the body, it knows not. This hath ingrafted a natural unwillingness in the soul to let go the body, whereby from the first instant of its being, it hath constantly acted. That is but one reason of it, there is yet a greater.

2. The other reason is, that strict, near, unparallel'd union, and relation between the soul and the body. There is a near union between parents and children, a nearer between husband and wife; but they are nothing to this union between the soul and body. There is an ineffable, inconceivable union between the two natures, the divine, and the humane, in the person of the Son of God; but this union was eternally indissoluble from the first moment of it, when the body and soul of Christ were separated, yet they continued in their union with the person of the Son of God, as much as before or as now in heaven. But here is an union that is dissoluble between an heavenly spirit, and an earthly, sensual body, that is, two essential parts of the same nature. Pray give me leave to speak a little to it. I have considered what it is to die, and examined whence ariseth the difficulty. Now, I say, it ariseth from this peculiar constitution of our nature, there being no such thing in all the works of God, in heaven above, or in the earth beneath. The angels are pure, immaterial spirits, they have nothing in them that can die. God can annihilate an angel; he that made all things out of nothing, can bring all things into nothing; but an angel cannot die from the principles of his own constitution; there is nothing in him that can die. A brute creature hath nothing in it that can live, when death comes. The spirit of a beast *Solomon* speaks of, as that which *goeth downward*. It is not the object of Almighty Power to preserve it, because it is nothing but the act of the body in its temperature and constitution. But now man is *Medium Participationis*, he hath an angelical nature from above, that cannot die; and a nature from beneath that cannot always live, since the entrance of sin, tho' it might have done so before. And therefore in the product of man, there was a double act of creation, and but a single act in any other creature. The creation of angels is not mentioned, unless in that, *Let there be light, and there was light*; but in all other things there was but one single act for its production. But when God came to make man, there was two distinct acts of creation. *God made man of the dust of the earth*. And what then? *And breathed into him the spirit of life*. Here is something that is not in all God's creation beside. And now upon this dissolution, all the actions of this nature, as it was one person, must cease unto the day of the resurrection. A wonderful change it is, that there shall be no more acting of the entire nature of man, until the resurrection; only one part of this nature continues to act itself according to its own powers. And one end of God's work upon us in the grave, is to free our bodies from all alliance, and relation, and likeness unto the bodies of beasts. So our Saviour tells us, *Luke xx*. Do not mistake, saith he, *You shall neither marry, nor give in marriage*, nor have any one action common to brutes, but the whole man shall be, *ὡς Ἀγγέλων* like unto the angels. This is the great privilege of our nature, as the wiseman declares, *Eccl. iii. 19*. where he answers the objection of an *Epicure*: *That which befalls the sons of men, befalls beasts, even one thing befalls them; as one dies, so dies the other; they have all one breath; so that a man hath no prebeminence above a beast; all go unto their own place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again*. As far as I can see it is so, saith the man. But what saith the wiseman? *Who knoweth the spirit of a man that goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth?* Alas! you are mistaken, the difference doth not lie in this outward nature wherein man and beast have a near alliance one to another; but in the spiritual, heavenly nature, that is from above; and unless you know that, you will think all are as beasts indeed. This then is the foundation of the unalterable aversation in the mind and soul to part with the body, this strange constitution of our nature, which has nothing like it in the whole work of God, nothing to give us any representation of it, but it is peculiar unto us. And then this dissolution is but once to be made.

They

They observe of the old heroes, who would freely venture their lives, and cast them away in any great attempt, that when they came to die, when they had killed themselves, or were killed by others, their souls went away with groaning, and indignation: they knew not how to bear the dissolution of the union.

And therefore this is in us all, brethren, 'tis our first desire, which we have upon a prospect that we cannot continue here, *to be clothed upon*, and as the Apostle says, *That mortality may be swallowed up of life*; that the body and soul together may go into immortality and glory. But this is not God's way; this is that he will bring us to, that we be ready and willing to part with these bodies of ours, notwithstanding this union, or we cannot die chearfully and comfortably.

Upon what grounds then can a man be ready and willing to lay down his tabernacle in the dust?

I shall fix upon two reasons, both given us by the same Apostle.

(1.) The first is that which he gives us *Phil. i. 23. Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.* *Ἐπιθυμία ἔχω, I have a strong bent and inclination of spirit.* The word is that which in Scripture is used for *lust* and *concupiscence*, that is always working with strong bent and inclination. It is not a desire that sometimes befalls me, now and then, when in trouble, sickness, or pain; but I have an habitual, constant inclination. Unto what? *Ἀναλῦσαι, to depart, to leave this body.* It is usually translated in the passive; I have a desire *to be dissolved*. But the plain meaning of the word is this; *I do desire that the contexture of my nature may be reduced into its distinct principles, may be analyzed.* Now *Analysis* is the reducing of a speech from the present contexture into its proper distinct principles. Then here lies the difficulty. I told you the soul hath an aversion to this dissolution; and yet the Apostle saith, I have a continual, strong inclination to it. To what? Pray observe it: *To be with Christ.* I have no inclination or desire to be dissolved as the end, but only as the means for another end, that without it I cannot be with Christ. There is my end. And so far with respect unto that end, that which is in itself no object of inclination, becomes an object of desire. Brethren, I know no man dies willingly; no man living can have an habitual inclination to close chearfully with this dissolution; but by looking upon it as a means to come to the enjoyment of Christ. I tell you, your bodies are better to you than all the world, than all your goods, or any thing else; but Christ is better to the soul than any thing: and therefore unless it be for the enjoyment of Christ, let men pretend what they will, there is no man willing to part with the body, to be dissolved. Grow in that desire of coming to Christ, and you will conquer the unwillingness of death.

(2.) The second reason is given us, *Rom. viii. 10. The body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness.* The body is not only doomed to death by reason of original sin, as death entred upon all on that account; but the body must be brought to death, that sin may be rooted out of it. Sin hath taken such a close, inseparable habitation in the body, that nothing but the death of the body can make a separation. The body must be dead because of sin. Saith the sincere soul, God knows that I have a thousand times attempted a thorough and absolute mortification of every sin, and God hath helped me to endeavour that it should abide no more in me. I have sometimes thought myself near an attainment, but I have found a disappointment, and I am perfectly satisfied in it, that as long as I have this body I shall never be without sin; it must be dead by reason of sin, or the fibres and roots of it will never be plucked up, the nature of it can never be extinguished, it can never be separated utterly from it. Here lies the great mystery of the grave under the covenant of grace, and by virtue of the death of Christ. What is it? Worms and corruption? No, it is God's fining-pot, his way to purify, and there is no other way to make an eternal separation between sin and the body, but by consuming of it in the grave. A secret virtue shall issue out from the death of Christ unto the body of a believer laid in the grave, that shall eternally purify it at its resurrection from every thing of sin. I will not say what apprehensions some have had concerning the state of souls upon the consumption of the body in the grave, because I will speak nothing unto you that is questionable.

This then is the second reason, That all other attempts to eradicate sin have failed, and not had their issue; they have brought me to be ashamed of myself in the frowardness, darkness, and unbelief of my nature; I will therefore be willing to part with

my body. Such an one then will say, This is that which God calls me unto. Go then thou poor, mortal, sinful flesh, *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.* I give thee up unto the doom of the Holy One, whose mouth hath spoken it, that thou must return to the dust, and there he will refine thee, and purify thee, that notwithstanding this departure, *my glory shall rejoice,* and thou *my flesh shall rest in hope,* for the time will come, when he *will have a desire to the work of his hands;* and *will call, and thou shalt answer* him out of the dust, as *Job* xiv. 15. Be not afraid to enter into darkness, as there is no sting in death, so there is no darkness in the grave whither thou art going. It is but lying so long in the hands of the great refiner, who will purge, purify, and restore thee. Therefore lie down in the dust in peace.

This is the second thing that is required in men that would die with their eyes open, that would die chearfully and comfortably, according to the will of God; to be willing to leave the body to God's disposal to be laid up in the dust, because thereby it shall come to see Christ, and likewise shall have an end of sin.

I shall name but one thing more, and that very briefly; but it is the great thing that I would give in charge to my own soul: I pray God help me so to do. And it is this:

III. Let us take heed of being surprized with death.

This is that peculiar wisdom which God calls us all unto at this day. We know not how soon we may be called upon by death. It may not come in an ordinary course, by long sickness, and give us warning; nor when we have lived to the age of a man, which is *threescore years and ten*, as the *Psalmist* speaks; but we may be surprized with it, when we look not for it. He that hath not learned it for himself from the dealings of God at this present in the world, and in this congregation, will not believe it if one should come from the dead and tell him so. Let this then be fixed upon our minds, that whatsoever be our state and condition, some are strong, young, and healthy, and some of us are old and feeble going out of the world; but there are none of us but may be surprized with it. Take heed therefore that you be not surprized in an ill frame. I hope there are none of you, but do understand that there is great variety in the frames of believers, sometimes they are in a good frame, grace is active and quick, they are ready to take impressions by the word, and warnings, delighting in holy thoughts; and sometimes again, it may be the world, temptations, or self-love comes in, or overvaluation of our relations, and indisposes them again, and they are very unfit and lifeless for the performance of duties with delight and vigour of spirit; and these they loose, though they keep up to all their duties. I persuade myself you will confirm this with your own experience. There is no maintaining (tho' there may be impressions) of a quick, holy, lively frame, but by a sedulous contemplation, and constant view of things that are above. Many will tell you, that when God hath been pleased to keep up their minds unto the thoughts of things above, and draw out their affections to cleave unto them, all things have gone well with them, every prayer had life in it, and every sermon and duty, pleasure and joy, and their hearts have lain down and arose in peace. But when they have lost their view of spiritual things, all other things continue, but there is a kind of deadness upon them. Why then our wisdom in this case is to labour to keep up this spiritual view of eternal things, in a holy contemplation of, and cleaving to them in our affections, or death will be surprizing; come when it will, you will be surprized by it. But if this be our frame, what comes this messenger for? Death is a messenger sent of God; he knocks at the door, and what comes he for? To perfect the frame you are in, that you may see heavenly things more clearly. He is come to free you from that deadness you are burthened withal, that darkness you are entangled with, and to set you at perfect liberty in the enjoyment of those things your souls cleave unto. How then can your souls but bid this messenger welcome? Pray then that God would keep up your souls by fresh supplies of his spirit, unto a constant view of heavenly things. And you must do it by prayer, that God would give you fresh oil, to encrease light in your minds and understandings. Some can tell you by experience, that having made it their business with all their strength and study to live in that frame, they have found their own light decay, so that it would not be so fixed and constant towards heavenly things, nor so affect the heart as it had done before. Their light would work no more, 'till fresh supplies from the Holy

Ghost

Ghost gave quickness to it, and fresh oil to encrease, to discern the beauty of spiritual and heavenly things. In plain terms, I speak to dying men, that know not how soon they may die. God advise my own heart of this thing, that I should labour and watch that death might not find me out of the view of spiritual things. If it do, if our bellies cleave unto the dust, and our eyes are turned to the ground, if we are filled with other things, and death approaches, do you think it will be an easy thing to gather in your minds and affections to a compliance with it? You will not find it so. When *David* was in a good frame, he could say: *Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth: O Lord, into thine hands I commit my spirit.* I am willing to come and lay down my tabernacle, and embrace this messenger. But *David* falls from his good frame, under some decays of spirit, *Psal. xxxix.* and there makes great complaint of it. Where is the readiness now of the good man, and where is his willingness of giving up his spirit into the hand of God? *Spare me a little that I may recover my strength,* ver. 13. Not his outward strength, but a better frame, fit to die in. And if death overtake us in such a frame, the best of us will be found to cry so: *O, spare me a little to recover my strength.* O, the entanglements that have been brought upon me by this and that temptation, and diversion; by this coldness and decay: O Lord, spare me a little. There is mercy with God for persons in this frame; but if it were the will of God, I had rather it should be: *Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*



JOHANNES OWEN

*S E R M O N XXIX.

A Vision of unchangeable, free Mercy, in sending the
Means of Grace to undeserving Sinners.

Whereunto is annexed, A Country Essay for the Practice of Church-
Government there.

AMPLISSIMO S E N A T U I,

Inclutissimo populi Anglicani conventui,

ob

Prisca Anglo-Britannorum jura strenue & fideliter asserta;

Libertatem patriam (nefariis quorundam molitionibus pæne pessundatam) recuperatam;

Justitiam fortiter, ἰσως, ἐπιεικῶς, ἀπερσσωπὸλἐπῶς administratam;

Ἄετιν in ecclesiasticis ἀνεστραγγιχὴν dissolutam, Ritus Pontificios, novitios, Antichri-
stianos abolitos;

Privilegia plebis Christianæ postliminio restituta;

Potissimum

Protectionem Dei O. M. his omnibus, aliisque innumeris, consilio, bello, domi, foras
gratiosè potitam;

Toto orbe jure meritissimo celeberrimo,

Toti huic insulæ æternâ memoriâ recolendo,

Viris illustribus, clarissimis, selectissimis, ex ordine Communium in suprema curia
Parliam. congregatis.

CONCIONEM hanc sacram, humilem illam quidem, ipsorum tamen voto jussuque prius
coram ipsis habitam, nunc luce donatam,

D. D. C.

JOANNES OWEN.

* This Sermon was preached before the Honourable House of Commons, April 29, 1646, being the Day of
Publick Humiliation.

ACTS xvi. 9.

And a Vision appeared to Paul in the Night, there stood a Man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.



THE kingdom of Jesus Christ is frequently in the Scripture compared to a growing thing; small in the beginning and first appearance, but increasing by degrees unto glory and perfection. The shapeless stone cut out without hands, having neither form, nor desirable beauty given unto it, becomes a great mountain, filling the whole earth, *Dan. ii. 35.* The small vine brought out of *Egypt*, quickly covers the hills with her shadow, her boughs reach unto the sea, and her branches unto the rivers, *Psal. lxxx. 8.* The tender plant becomes as the cedars of God; and the grain of mustard-seed to be a tree for the fowls of the air, to make their nests in the branches thereof. Mountains are made plains before it, every valley is filled, and the crooked paths made strait, that it may have a passage to its appointed period: and all this, not only, not supported by outward advantages, but in direct opposition to the combined power of this whole creation, as fallen, and in subjection to the god of this world, the head thereof. As Christ was a tender plant, seemingly easy to be broken, and a root out of a dry ground, not easily flourishing, yet liveth for ever; so his people and kingdom, though as a lily among thorns, as sheep among wolves, as a turtle dove among a multitude of devourers, yet stands unshaken, at least unshivered.

The main ground and foundation of all this is laid out, *ver. 6, 7, 8, 9*, of this chapter, containing a rich discovery, how all things here below, especially such as concern the Gospel and Church of Christ, are carried along thotow innumerable varieties, and a world of contingencies, according to the regular motions and goings forth of a free, eternal, unchangeable decree: as all inferior orbs, notwithstanding the excentricks and irregularities of their own inhabitants, are orderly carried about by the first mover.

In *ver. 6*, the planters of the Gospel are forbid to preach the word in Asia, (that part of it peculiarly so called) and *ver. 7*, assaying to go with the same message into Bithynia, they are crossed by the spirit in their attempts: but in my text, are called to a place, on which their thoughts were not at all fixed: which calling, and which forbidding, were both subservient to his free determination, who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will, *Ephes. i. 11.*

And no doubt but in the dispensation of the Gospel throughout the world, unto this day, there is the like conformity to be found, to the pattern of God's eternal decrees; though to the messengers not made known aforehand by revelation, but discovered in the effects, by the mighty working of providence.

Amongst other nations, this is the day of England's visitation, the day-spring from on high having visited this people, and the sun of righteousness arising upon us, with healing in his wings, a man of England hath prevailed for assistance, and the free grace of God hath wrought us help by the Gospel.

Now in this day three things are to be done, to keep up our spirits unto this duty, of bringing down our souls by humiliation.

First, To take us off the pride of our own performances, endeavours, or any adherent worth of our own. *Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord; be it*

^a Ecclesia sicut luna defectus habet, & ortus frequentes; sed defectibus suis crevit, &c. hac est vera luna, quae de fratribus suis luce perpetua, lumen sibi immortalitatis & gratia mutuatur, Amb. Hex. lib. 4. cap. 8. Psal. lxxiii. 13.

^b Isa. liv. 11. Zech. iv. 7.

^c Isa. liii. 3, 4, 5.

^d 1 Joh. iii. 13. Rev. ii. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

^e Isa. liii. 2.

^f Heb. vii. 25.

^g Cant. ii. 2.

^h Mat. x. 16.

ⁱ Psal. lxxiv. 19.

^k Ea ipso tempore quo ad omnes gentes praedicatio evangelii mittebatur, quadam loca Apostolus adire prohibebatur ab eo, qui vult omnes homines salvos fieri, Prosp. Ep. ad Rufin. Δις δ' ἐκείνῳ βυλγ. Hom.

^l Mal. iv. 2.

known unto you, be ye ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel, [O house of England] Ezek. xxxvi. 32.

Secondly, To root out that atheistical corruption, which depresses the thoughts of men, not permitting them in the highest products of providence, to look above contingencies, and secondary causes; though God *bath wrought all our works for us*, Isa. xxvi. 12. and *known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world*, Acts xv. 18.

Thirdly, To shew that the bulk of this people are as yet in the wilderness, far from their resting place, like sheep upon the mountains, as once *Israel*, Jer. l. 6. as yet wanting help by the Gospel.

The two first of these will be cleared, by discovering how that all revolutions here below, especially every thing that concerns the dispensation of the Gospel and kingdom of the Lord Jesus, are carried along, according to the eternally fixed purpose of God, free in itself, taking neither rise, growth, cause, nor occasion, from any thing amongst the sons of men.

The third, by laying open the helpless condition of Gospel-wanting souls, with some particular application, to all which my text directly leads me.

The words in general are the relation of a message from heaven unto *Paul*, to direct him in the publishing of the Gospel, as to the place, and persons wherein, and to whom he was to preach. And in them you have these four things:

1. The manner of it, it was by vision. *A vision appeared.*
2. The time of it. *In the night.*
3. The bringer of it. *A man of Macedonia.*
4. The matter of it. *Help for the Macedonians*, interpreted, *ver. 10.* to be by preaching of the Gospel.

A little clearing of the words will make way for observations.

1. For the manner of the delivery of this message, it was by vision. Of all the ways that God used of old, to reveal himself unto any in an extraordinary manner, which were sundry and various, Heb. i. 1. there was no one so frequent as this of vision. Wherein this did properly consist, and whereby it was distinguished from other ways of the discovery of the secrets of the Lord, I shall not now discuss. In general, visions are revelations of the mind of the Lord, concerning some hidden things present or future, and not otherwise to be known. And they were of two sorts:

(1.) Revelations merely by ^m word, or some other more internal ⁿ species, without any outward sensible appearance, which, for the most part was the Lord's way of proceeding with the prophets; which transient light, or discovery of things before unknown, they called a ^o vision.

(2.) Revelations accompanied with some sensible apparitions, and that either,

[1.] Of things, as usually among the prophets, ^p rods and pots, ^q wheels and trees, lamps, axes, vessels, rams, goats, and the like, were presented unto them.

[2.] Of persons, and those, according to the variety of them, of three sorts.

1.) Of the second person of the Trinity: and this either,

(1. In respect of some glorious beams of his deity, as to *Isaiah*, chap. vi. 1. with *John* xii. 41. to *Daniel*, chap. x. ver. 5, 6. as afterwards to *John*, Rev. i. 13, 14, 15. to which you may add the apparitions of the glory of God, not immediately designing the second person, as *Ezek.* i.

(2. With reference to his humanity to be assumed, as to *Abraham*, Gen. xviii. 1, 2. to *Josbua*, chap. v. 13, 14, 15, &c.

2.) Of angels, as unto *Peter*, Acts xii. 7. to the woman, *Mat.* xxviii. 2. to *John*, Rev. xxii. 8, &c.

3.) Of ^r men, as in my text.

Now the several advancements of all these ways in dignity and preeminence, according as they clearly make out intellectual verity, or according to the honour and exaltation of that whereof apparition is made, is too fruitless a ^t speculation for this day's exercise.

^m Isa. i. 1. ⁿ Amos i. 1. ^o Nah. i. 1. Obad. i. ^p Jer. i. 11, 13. ^q Ezek. i. 5, 6, 7.
Zech. i. 8. and iii. 9, 10, &c. Dan. vii. 8, 9. ^r Zech. ii. 1.
^t Vid. Aquin. 2. 2. q. 174. Art. 3, 4. Scot in dist. tert.

Our vision is of the latter sort, accompanied with a sensible appearance, and is called *ὄραμα*. There be two words in the New Testament signifying vision, *ὄραμα*, and *ὀπτασία*, coming from different verbs, but both signifying to see. Some distinguish them, and say that *ὀπτασία* is a vision, *καθ' ὕπναι*, an appearance to a man awake; *ὄραμα*, *καθ' ὄναρ*, an appearance to a man asleep, called sometimes a dream, *Job xxxiii. 15.* like that which was made to *Joseph*, *Mat. ii. 19.* But this distinction will not hold, our Saviour calling that vision, which his disciples had at his transfiguration, when doubtless they were waking, *ὄραμα*, *Mat. xvii. 9.* So that I conceive *Paul* had this vision waking; and the night is specify'd, as the time thereof, not to intimate his being asleep, but rather his watchfulness, seeking counsel of God in the night, which way he should apply himself in the preaching of the Gospel. And such I conceive was that of latter days, whereby God revealed to *Zuinglius* a strong confirmation of the doctrine of the Lord's supper, from *Exod. xii. 11.* against the factors for that monstrous figment of transubstantiation.

2. For the second, or time of this vision, I need say no more, than what before I intimated.

3. The bringer of the message, *ἀνὴρ τις ἦν Μακεδόνων ἐσὼς*, he was a man of *Macedonia* in a vision: the Lord made an appearance unto him, as of a man of *Macedonia*, discovering even to his bodily eyes a man, and to his mind, that he was to be conceived as a man of *Macedonia*. This was, say some, an angel; the tutelar angel of the place, say the popish expositors, or the genius of the place, according to the phrase of the heathens, of whom they learned their daemonology; perhaps him, or his antagonist, that not long before appeared to *Brutus* ^a at *Philippi*. But these are pleasing dreams: us it may suffice, that it was the appearance of a man, the mind of *Paul* being enlightened to apprehend him as a ^w man of *Macedonia*, and that with infallible assurance, such as usually accompanieth divine revelations, in them to whom they are made, as *Jer. xxiii. 28.* for upon it, *Luke* affirmeth, *ver. 10.* they assuredly concluded, that the Lord called them into *Macedonia*.

4. The message itself is a discovery of the want of the *Macedonians*, and the assistance they required, which the Lord was willing should be imparted unto them. Their want is not expressed, but included in the assistance desired, and the person unto whom for it they were directed. Had it been to help them in their estates, they should scarcely have been sent to *Paul*, who I believe, might for the most part say with *Peter*, ^x *Silver and gold have I none.* Or had it been with a complaint, that they, who from a province of *Greece*, in a corner of *Europe*, had on a sudden been exalted into the empire of the eastern world, were now enslaved to the *Roman* power and oppression, they might better have gone to the *Parthians*, then the only state in the world formidable to the *Romans*. *Paul*, though a military man, yet fought not with *Nero's* legions, the then visible Devil of the upper world; but with legions of hell, of whom the ^y earth was now to be cleared. It must be a soul-want, if he be entrusted with the supplying of it. And such this was, help from death, hell, Satan, from the jaws of that devouring lion: of this the Lord makes them here to speak, what every one in that condition ought to speak, Help for the Lord's sake, it was a call to preach the Gospel.

The words being opened, we must remember what was said before of their connexion with the *verses* foregoing; wherein the preachers of the Gospel are expressly hindered from above, from going to other places, and called hither. Whereof no reason is assigned, but only the will of him that did imploy them: and that no other can be rendred, I am farther convinced, by considering the empty conjectures of attempters.

God foresaw that they would oppose the Gospel, says our *Beda*. So, say I, might he of all nations in the world, had not he determined to send his ^z effectual grace

ⁱ Mede. Apost. of later times.

^v A Lapide, Sanctius in locum, &c.

^a Plutarch. in vit. Bruti.

^w Calvin. in locum. Dicebat se discernere, (nescio quo sapore, quem verbis explicare non poterat) quid interesset inter Deum revelantem, &c. Aug. confes.

^x Acts iii. 6.

^y Plutarch de defect. oracu.

^z Ἐβραῖος κέλεται με πᾶς μακάρεσιν ἀνέστην,
Τοι δὲ δόμον προλιπεῖν καὶ ὁδοὺς πάλιν ἀνδρὶς ἐκείνου.

Respons. Apoll. apud Euseb. Niceph.

^a nullo duro corde resistitur, quia cor ipsum emollit, Aug. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Deut. xxx. 6.

for the removal of that opposition: besides, he grants the means of grace to despisers, *Matth. xi. 21.* They were not prepared for the Gospel, says *Oecumenius*. As well, say I, as the *Corinthians*, whose preparations you may see, *1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.* or any other nation, as we shall afterwards declare; yet to this foolish conjecture adhere the *Papists* and *Arminians*. God would have those places left for to be converted by *John*, says *Sedulius*: yet the Church at *Ephesus*, the chief city of those parts was planted by *Paul*, says *Ignatius* and *Irenaeus*. He foresaw a famine to come upon those places, says *Origen*; from which he would deliver his own, and therefore, it seems, left them to the power of the devil. More such ^c fancies might we recount, of men, unwilling to submit to the will of God; but upon that as the sole discriminating cause of these things we rest, and draw these three observations.

I. The rule whereby all things are dispensed here below, especially in the making out of the means of grace, is the determinate will and counsel of God. *Stay not in Asia, go not into Bithynia, but come to Macedonia, even so, O Father, for so, &c.*

II. The sending of the Gospel to any nation, place, or persons, rather than others, as the means of life and salvation, is of the mere, free grace, and good pleasure of God. *Stay not in Asia, &c.*

III. No men in the world want help, like them that want the Gospel. *Come and help us.*

I. Begin we with the first of these: The rule whereby, &c. All events and effects, especially concerning the propagation of the Gospel, and the Church of Christ, are in their greatest variety, regulated by the eternal ^d purpose and counsel of God.

All things below in their events are but the ^e wax, whereon the eternal seal of God's purpose hath left its own impression, and they every way answer unto it. It is not my mind to extend this to the generality of things in the world, nor to shew how the creature, can by no means deviate from that eternal rule of providence whereby it is guided; no more than an arrow can avoid the mark, after it hath received the impression of an unerring hand; or well-ordered wheels not turn, according to the motion given them by the master spring; or the wheels in *Ezekiel's* ^f vision move irregularly to the spirit of life that was in them. Nor yet secondly, how that, on the other side, doth no way prejudice the liberty of ^g second causes, in their actions, agreeable to the natures they are indued withal. He who made and preserves the fire, and yet hinders not, but that it should burn, or act necessarily agreeable to its nature; by his making, preserving, and guiding of men, hindreth not, yea effectually causeth, that they work freely, agreeable to their nature. Nor yet thirdly, to clear up what a strait line runs through all the darknets, ^h confusion, and disorder in the world, how absolutely, in respect of the first fountain, and last tendency of things, there is neither deformity, fault, nor deviation, every thing that is amiss consisting in the ⁱ transgression of a moral rule, which is the sin of the creature, the first cause being free: as he that causeth a lame man to go, is the cause of his going, but not of his going lame: or the sun exhaling a smell from the kennel, is the cause of the smell, but not of its noisomeness, for from a garden his beams raise a sweet savour. Nothing is amiss but what goeth off from its own rule; which he cannot do, who will do all his ^k pleasure, and knows no other rule.

But omitting these things, I shall tie my discourse to that which I chiefly aimed at in my proposition, *viz.* to discover how the great variety which we see in the dispensation of the means of grace, proceedeth from, and is regulated by some eternal

^a Lapid. Sanctius in loc. Rom. Script. Synd. ar. 1.

^b Ἰμῶς μὲν οὐκ ἐστὶ τοῖσιν, ἀλλὰ τοῖσινδε παῖδουσὶν σοιχειαδίης Παύλῳ τῷ Χριστοφόρῳ Ignat. Epist. ad Ep. Iren. lib. 3. cap. 3.

^c Qui causam quæ sit voluntatis divina, aliquid majus eo querit, Aug. Voluntas Dei nullo modo causam habet, Aquin. p. q. 12. a. 5.

^d Οὐκ αὐτῶν δὲ, ἀλλὰ ἐκ τῆς ἀπαντα ἐκ τοῦ, καὶ διαφέρει. Theophrast. apud Picum. De prov.

^e Providentia est ratio ordinis rerum ad finem, Th. p. q. 22. a. 1. 6. ^f Ezek. i.

^g Non tantum res, sed rerum modos. ^h Videtur ergo quod non sit aliqua deordinatio, deformitas, aut peccatum simpliciter in toto universo, sed tantummodo respectu interiorum causarum, ordinationem superioris causa voluntarium, licet non valentium, perturbare. Brad. de caus. Dei. lib. 1. cap. 34. ⁱ Ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.

^k Adeo summa iustitia regula est Dei voluntas, ut quicquid vult, eo ipso quod vult, iustum habendum sit, Aug. 1^a. xlvi. 16.

purpose of God, unfolded in his word. To make out this, we must lay down three things.

1. The wonderful variety in dispensing of the outward means of salvation, in respect of them, unto whom they were granted, used by the Lord since the fall: I say, since the fall, for the grace of preserving from sin, and continuing with God, had been general, universally extended to every creature; but for the grace of rising from sin, and coming again unto God, that is made exceeding various, by some distinguishing purpose.

2. That this outward dispensation being presupposed, yet in effectual working upon particular persons, there is no less variety, for *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.*

3. Discover the rules of this whole administration.

1. For the first, The promise was at first made unto *Adam*, and by him doubtless conveyed to his issue, and preached to the several generations, which his eyes beheld, proceeding from his own loins; but yet by the ¹ wickedness of the old world, all flesh corrupting their ways, we may easily collect, that the knowledge of it quickly departed from the most, sin banishing the love of God from their hearts, hindred the knowledge of God from continuing in their minds. After many ^m revivings, by visions, revelations, and covenants, it was at length called in from the wide world, and wholly restrained to the house, family, and seed of ⁿ *Abraham*, with whom alone all the means of grace continued, for thrice fourteen generations; they alone were in *Goshen*, and all the world besides in thick darkness; the dew of heaven was on them as the fleece, when else all the earth was dry. *God shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel, he hath not dealt so with any nation*, Psal. cxli. 19, 20. The prerogative of the *Jews* was chiefly in this, that to them were committed the oracles of God, *Rom. iii. To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, the covenants, and the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises*, *Rom. ix. 4.* But when the ^o fulness of time came, the Son of God being sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, drew all men unto him; and God, who had before winked at the time of their ignorance, then called them every where to repent, commanding the Gospel to be preached to the universality of reasonable creatures, and the way of salvation to be proclaimed unto all; upon which, in few years, the sound of the Gospel went out into all ^p nations, and the sun of righteousness displayed his beams upon the habitable parts of the earth. But yet once more this light, by Satan and his agents, persecutors, and seducers, is almost extinguished, as was foretold, *2 Thes. ii.* remaining but in few places, and burning dim where it was, the kingdom of the beast being full of darkness, *Rev. xvi. 10.* Yet God again raiseth up reformers, and by them kindles a light, we hope, never to be put out. But alas, what a spot of ground doth this shine on, in comparison of the former vast extents and bounds of the Christian world! Now is all this variety, think you, to be ascribed unto chance, as the Philosopher thought the world was made by a casual concurrence of atoms? Or hath the idol free-will, with the new goddess's contingency, ruled in these dispensations? Truly neither the one, nor the other; no more than the fly raised the dust by sitting on the chariot wheel; but all these things have come to pass, according to a certain unerring rule, given them by God's determinate purpose and counsel.

2. Presupposing this variety in the outward means, how is it that thereupon one is taken, another left? The promise is made known to *Cain* and *Abel*; one the first murderer, the other the first martyr. *Jacob* and *Esau* had the same outward advantages, but the one becomes *Israel*, the other *Edom*, the one inherits the promises, the other sells his right for a mess of pottage. At the preaching of our Saviour, some believed, some blasphemed; some said he was *a good man*, others said, nay, *but he deceived the people*. Have we not the word in its power this day, and do we not see the like various Effects, some continuing in impenitency, others in sincerity closing with Jesus Christ? Now what shall we say to these things? What

¹ Gen. iii. 15. Chap. iv. 26.

^m Gen. vi. 5.

ⁿ Gen. v. 24. and vi. 18.

^o Gen. xii. 1.

and xviii. 1, 2. Psal. lxxvi. 1, 2. John iv. 22. Gal. iv. 4. Joh. xii. 32. Acts xvii. 30. Mark xvi. 15. Mal. iii. 4. Prov. viii. 31.

^p See Tertullian, lib. ad Jud. reckoning almost all the known nations of the world, and affirming that they all, that is, some in them, in his days, submitted to the scepter of Christ. He lived in the end of the second Century.

guides these wheels? Who thus steers his word for the good of souls? Why this also, as I said before, is from some peculiarly distinguishing purpose of the will of God.

3. To open the third thing proposed, I shall shew: (1.) That all this variety is according to God's determinate purpose, and answereth thereunto: (2.) The particular purposes from whence this variety proceedeth.

(1.) Ephes. i. 11. *He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.* As a man may be said to erect a ⁹ fabrick according to the counsel of his will, when he frameth it before in his mind, and maketh all things in event answer his preconceived platform. All things (especially τὰ πάντα all those things of which the Apostle there treateth, Gospel-things) have their futurition, and manner of being, from his ¹ eternal purpose: whence also is the idea in the mind of God, of all things with their ¹ circumstances, that shall be: that is the first mover, continuing itself immovable, giving to every thing a regular morion, according to the impression which from that it doth receive: *For known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world,* Acts xv. 18.

If any attendants of actions might free and exempt them from the regular dependence we insist upon, they must be either contingency, or sin; but yet for both these we have, besides general rules, clear, particular ¹ instances. What seems more contingent and casual, than the unadvised slaying of a man, with the fall of the head of an axe from the helve, as a man was cutting wood by the way-side? *Drut.* xix. 5. Yet God assumes this as his own work, *Exod.* xxiii. 13. The same may be said of free agents, and their actions. And for the other, see *Acts* iv. 27, 28. in the crucifying of the Son of God's love, all things came to pass according as his counsel had before determined that it should be done. Now how in the one of these liberty is not abridged, the nature of things not changed in the other, sin is not ¹ countenanced, belongs not to this discourse. *The counsel of the Lord then standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart are unto all generations,* Psal. xxxiii. 12. *His counsel standeth, and he will do all his pleasure,* Isa. xli. 10. *for he is the Lord, and he changeth not,* Mal. iii. 6. *with him is neither variableness nor shadow of turning,* Jam. i. 17. All things that are, come to pass in that unchangeable method, in which he hath laid them down from all eternity.

(2.) Let us look peculiarly upon the purposes according to which the dispensations of the Gospel, both in sending, and withholding it, do proceed.

[1.] For the not sending of the means of grace unto any people, whereby they hear not the joyful sound of the Gospel, but have in all ages followed dumb idols, as many do unto this day.

In this chapter of which we treat, the Gospel is forbidden to be preached in *Asia* and *Bithynia*; which restraint, the Lord by his providence, as yet continues to many parts of the world. Now the purpose from whence this proceedeth, and whereby it is regulated, you have *Rom.* ix. 22. *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of his wrath fitted to destruction:* compared with *Matth.* xi. 25, 26. *Thou hast hid these things from the prudent and wise, even so, O Father, for so it seemed good before thee:* and with *Acts* xiv. 16. *He suffered all nations to walk in their ¹ own ways.* Now God's not sending the truth, hath the same design and aim with his sending, the efficacy of error, viz. *That they all may be damned,* who have it not: *there being no other name under heaven, whereby they may be saved, but only that which is not revealed unto them:* God in the mean time, being no more the ¹ cause of their sins, for which they incur damnation, than the sun is the cause of cold and darkness, which follow the absence thereof: or he is the cause of a man's imprisonment for debt, who will not pay his debt for him, tho' he be no way obliged so to do. So

⁹ Pflcat. in loc.

Damascin. satis impie.

¹ Mar. x. 29. Job xiv. 5. Prov. xvi. 33. Prov. xxi. 1, 30. and xix. 21. Nihil sit nisi omnipotens fieri velit, vel ipse faciendo, vel sinendo ut fiat. Aug.

² Kin. v. 18, 19. Psal. lxxvi. 10. Eccl. vii. 26. Isa. vi. 9, 10, 11, &c.

¹ Gen. iv. 5, 6, 7. 1 Kin. xxii. 19, 20, 21. Deus non operatur in malis, quod ei displicet; sed operatur per eos quod ei placet; recipientur vero non pro eo, quod Deus bene usus est ipsorum operibus malis, sed pro eo, quod ipsi male abusi sunt Dei operibus bonis, Fulgent. ad Monim.

² Thef. ii. Acts iv. Liberatur pars hominum, parte pereunte. Sed cur horum miseris sit Deus, illorum non miseris, quæ scientia comprehendere potest? Latet discretionis ratio, sed non latet ipsa discretio, Prosp. de Vocat. Gen.

then the not sending of the Gospel to any people, is an act regulated by that eternal purpose of God, whereby he determineth to advance the glory of his justice, by permitting some men to sin, to continue in their sin, and for sin to send them to their own place: as a king's not sending a pardon to condemned malefactors, is an issue of his purpose, that they shall die for their faults. When you see the Gospel strangely, and through wonderful varieties, and unexpected providences, carried away from a people, know that the spirit which moves in those wheels, is that purpose of God which we have recounted.

[2.] To some people, to some nations, the Gospel is sent: God calls them to repentance and acknowledgment of the truth, as in my text, *Macedonia*: and *England*, the day wherein we breath. Now there is in this a twofold aim: 1.) Peculiar, towards some in their conversion. 2.) General, towards all for conviction. And therefore it is acted according to a twofold purpose, which carries it along, and is fulfilled thereby.

1.) His purpose of saving ^a some in and by Jesus Christ, effectually to bring them unto himself, for the praise of his glorious grace. Upon whomsoever the seal of the Lord is stamped, that God knows them, and owns them as his, to them he will cause his Gospel to be revealed. *Acts* xviii. 10. *Paul* is commanded to abide at *Corinth*, and to preach there, because God had much people in that city: tho' the Devil had them in present ^b possession, yet they were God's in his eternal counsel. And such as these they were, for whose sake the man of *Macedonia* is sent on his message. Have you never seen the Gospel hover about a nation, now and then about to settle, and anon scared and upon wing again; yet working through difficulties, making plains of mountains, and filling valleys, overthrowing armies, putting aliens to flight, and at length taking firm root like the cedars of God? Truly if you have not, you are strangers to the place wherein you live. Now what is all this, but the working of the purpose of God to attain its proposed end of gathering his Saints to himself? In effectual working of grace also for conversion and salvation, whence do you think it takes its rule and determination, in respect of particular objects, that it should be directed to *John*, not *Judas*; *Simon Peter*, not *Simon Magus*? Why only from this ^c discriminating counsel of God from eternity, to bring the one, and not the other to himself by Christ. *The Lord added to the Church such as should be saved, Acts* ii. 47. The purpose of saving is the rule of adding to the Church of believers. And *Acts* xiii. 48. *As many believed as were ordained to eternal life*. There fore-ordaining to life eternal, gives them right to faith and belief. The purpose of God's election, is the rule of dispensing saving grace.

2.) His purpose of leaving some ^d inexcusable in their sins, for the farther manifestation of his glorious justice, is the rule of dispensing the word unto them. Did you never see the Gospel sent, or continued to an ^e unthankful people, bringing forth no fruits meet for it? Wherefore it is so sent, see *Isa.* vi. 9, 10. which prophecy you have fulfilled, *John* xii. 41, 42. in men described; *Jude* iv. and 1 *Pet.* ii. 8. But here we must strike sail, the waves swell, and it is no easy task to sail in this gulph. The righteousness of God is a great mountain, easy to be seen; but his judgments like the great deep, who can search into the bottom thereof? *Psal.* xxxvi. 6. And so I have I hope discovered how all things here below, concerning the promulgation of the Gospel, are, in their greatest variety, straitly regulated by the eternal purposes and counsel of God.

The uses of it follow.

Use 1. To discover whence it is, that the work of reforming the worship of God, and settling the almost departing Gospel, hath so powerfully been carried along in this nation; that a beautiful fabrick is seen to arise in the midst of all oppositions, with the confusion of axes and hammers sounding about it, though the builders have been forced oftentimes, not only with one hand, but with both to hold the ^f weapons

^a Rom. viii. 28, 29. Ephes. i. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 19. ^b Ephes. ii. 1, 11. ^c Non ob aliud dicit, non vos me elegistis, sed ego vos elegi, nisi quia non elegerant eum, ut eligeret eos; sed ut eligerent eum, elegit eos. Non quia prescivit eos credituros, sed quia sciturus ipse fuisset credentes. Electi sunt itaque ante mundi constitutionem, ea predestinatione, qua Deus ipse sua futura facta praevidit: electi sunt autem de mundo ea vocatione, qua Deus id, quod predestinavit, implevit, August. de bon. persever. cap. 16, 17.

^d Mat. xi. 21. Acts xiii. 46.

^e Luke ii. 34. 1 Pet. i. 7. Ezek. ii. 5. Matth. xxiv. 15. Rom. ix. 23.

^f Neh. iv. 17.

of war; that altho' the wheels of our chariots have been knocked off, and they driven heavily, yet the regular motions of the superior wheels of providence have carried on the design, towards the resting place aimed at; that the ship hath been directed to the port, though the storm had quite puzzled the pilots and mariners: even from hence, that all this great variety was but to work out one certain, fore-appointed end, proceeding in the tracts and paths, which were traced out for it from eternity; which though they have seemed to us a maze or labyrinth, such a world of contingences, and various chances hath the work passed through; yet indeed all the passages thereof have been regular and strait, answering the platform laid down for the whole in the counsel of God. *Daniel*, chap. ix. makes his supplication for the restoration of *Jerusalem*, ver. 23. an angel is sent to tell him, that at the beginning of his supplication the commandment came forth, viz. that it should be accomplished; it was before determined, and is now set on work: but yet what ^s mountains of opposition, what hindrances lay in the way? *Cyrus* must come to the crown, by the ^h death or slaughter of *Darius*; his heart be moved to send some to the work; in a short time *Cyrus* is cut off; now difficulties arise from the following kings: what their flattering counsellors, what the malignant nations about them conspired, the books of *Nehemiah* and *Ezra* sufficiently declare. Whence, ver. 25. the angel tells *Daniel*, that from the commandment to restore and build *Jerusalem* unto *Messiah the prince*, shall be seven weeks, and sixty two weeks, the street shall be built again, and the wall in troublesome times; that is, it shall be seven weeks to the finishing of *Jerusalem*, and thence to *Messiah the prince*, sixty two weeks: seven weeks, that is, forty nine years, for so much it was, ⁱ from the decree of *Cyrus*, to the finishing of the wall by *Nehemiah*: of which time the temple, as the *Jews* affirmed, was all but three years in building, *John* ii. 20. During which space, how often did the hearts of the people of God faint in their troubles, as though they should never have seen an end? And therefore ever and anon they were ready to give over, as *Hag.* i. 2. But yet ye see the decree was fixed, and all those varieties did but orderly work in an exact method, for the glorious accomplishment of it.

England's troubles, have not yet endured above half the odd years of those reformers task; yet, good God! how short breathed are men! What fainting is there? what repining, what grudging against the ways of the Lord? But, let me tell you, that as the water in the stream will not go higher than the head of the fountain, no more will the work in hand be carried one step higher, or beyond the aim of its fountain, the counsel of God, from whence it hath its rise. And yet as a river will break through all oppositions, and swell to the height of mountains, to go to the sea from whence it came; so will the stream of the Gospel, when it comes out from God, break down all mountains of opposition, and not be hindered from resting in its appointed place. It were an easy thing to recal your minds to some trembling periods of time, when there was trembling in our armies, and trembling in our counsels; trembling to be ashamed, to be repented of; trembling in the city, and in the country, and men were almost at their wits end for the sorrows and fears of those days: and yet we see how the unchangeable purpose of God hath wrought strongly through all these streights, from one end to another, that nothing might fall to the ground of what he had determined. If a man in those days had gone about to persuade us, that all our pressures were good omens, that they all wrought together for our good, we could have been ready to cry with the woman, who when she had recounted her griefs to the physician, and he still reply'd, they were good signs, οἱ μοι ἀγαθὸν ἀπολλύμι, good signs have undone me, these good signs will be our ruin; yet behold, we hope, the contrary. Our day hath been like that mentioned, *Zech.* xiv. 6, 7. a day whose light is neither clear nor dark, a day known only to

^{*} *Zech.* iv. 7.

^h *Scal. de Emend. Temp.*

ⁱ I follow in this the vulgar or common account, otherwise there is no part of Scripture chronology so contended about, as these weeks of *Daniel*, most concluding, that they are terminated in the death of *Christ*, happening about the midst of the last week. But about their original, or rise, there is no small debate, of the four decrees made by the Persian Kings about the building of *Jerusalem*, viz. 1st. By *Cyrus*, 2 *Chron.* iii. 6. 2dly. By *Darius*, *Ezek.* vi. 3. 3dly. By *Artaxerxes*, *Ezek.* vii. of the same to *Nehemiah*, chap. ii. following the account of their reign set down in profane stories, the last only holds exactly. *Tertullian* ad *Iud.* begins it from *Darius*, when this vision appeared to *Daniel*, whom it seems he conceived to be *Darius Hystaspes*, that followed the *Magi*, and not *Medus*, that was before *Cyrus*: and so with a singular kind of chronology makes up his account. *Vid. Euseb. Demon. Eyan. lib. 8. cap. Fune. Com. in Chron. Beroald. chron. lib. 3. cap. 7, 8. Montacu. Appar.*

the Lord, seeming to us to be neither day nor night: but God knew all this while that it was a day, he saw how it all wrought for the appointed end: and in the evening, in the close, it will be light, so light as to be to us discernable. In the mean time, we are like unskilful men, going to the house of some curious artist, so long as he is about his work, despise it as confused; but when it is finished, admire it as excellent: whilst the passages of providence are on us, all is confusion, but when the fabrick is reared, glorious.

Use 2. Learn to look upon the wisdom of God in carrying all things through this wonderful variety, exactly to answer his own eternal purpose; suffering so many mountains to lie in the way of reforming his Churches, and setting the Gospel, that his spirit may have the glory, and his people the comfort in their removal. It is an high and noble contemplation, to consider the purposes of God, so far as by the event revealed, and to see what impressions his wisdom and power do leave upon things accomplished here below, to read in them a temporary history of his eternal counsels. Some men may deem it strange, that his determinate will, which gives rule to these things, and could in a word have reached its own appointment, should carry his people so many journies in the wilderness, and keep us thus long in so low estate: I say, not to speak of his own glory, which hath sparkled forth of this flinty opposition, there be divers things, things of light, for our good, which he hath brought forth out of all that darkness, wherewith we have been overclouded. Take a few instances.

(1.) If there had been no difficulties, there had been no deliverances. And did we never find our hearts so enlarged towards God upon such advantages, as to say, Well, this day's temper of spirit, was cheaply purchased by yesterday's anguish and fear? that was but a being sick at sea.

(2.) Had there been no tempests and storms, we had not made out for shelter. Did you never run to a tree for shelter in a storm, and find fruit which you expected not? Did you never go to God for ^a safeguard in these times, driven by outward storms, and there find unexpected fruit, the ¹ *peaceable fruit of righteousness*, that made you say, Happy tempest, which cast me into such an harbour? It was a ^m storm that occasioned the discovery of the golden mines of *India*: hath not a storm driven some to the discovery of the richer mines of the love of God in Christ?

(3.) Had not *Esau* come against him with 400 men, *Jacob* had not been called *Israel*; he had not been put to it to try his strength with God, and so to prevail. Who would not purchase with the greatest distress that heavenly comfort, which is in the return of prayers? The strength of God's *Jacobs* in this kingdom had not been known, if the *Esaus* had not come against them. Some say, this war hath made a discovery of *England's* strength, what it is able to do. I think so also, not what armies it can raise against men, but with what armies of prayers and tears it is able to deal with God. Had not the brethren strove in the womb, *Rebekah* had not asked, *Why am I thus?* Nor received that answer, *The elder shall serve the younger*. Had not two sorts of people struggled in the womb of this kingdom, we had not fought, nor received such gracious answers. Thus do all the various motions of the lower wheels serve for our good, and exactly answer the impression they receive from the master spring, the eternal purpose of God. Of this hitherto.

II. The sending of the Gospel to any one nation, rather than another, as the means of life and salvation, is of the mere free grace and good pleasure of God.

Now before I come to make out the absolute independency and freedom of this distinguishing mercy, I shall premise three things.

1. That the not sending of the Gospel to any person or people, is of God's mere ⁿ good pleasure, and not of any peculiar distinguishing demerit in that person or people. No man or nation doth *majorem ponere obicem*, lay more or greater obstacles against the Gospel than another. There is nothing imaginable to lay a block in the passage thereof, but only sin. Now these sins are, or may be, of two sorts; either *first*, against the Gospel itself, which may possibly hinder the receiving of the Gospel,

* Prov. xviii. 10.

¹ Heb. xii. 11.

ⁿ Pet. Mart. de Relig. Jud. decad. 1. lib. 1.

ⁿ *Qui liberatur, gratiam diligat, qui non liberatur, debitum agnoscat.* Aug. de bon. persever. cap. 8. *Ex nequissimis in ipso vita exitu gratia invenit quos adoptet, cum multi, qui minus nocentes viderantur, doni hujus alieni sunt.* Prof. de voc. Gen. lib. 1. cap. 17.

but not the sending of it, which it presupposeth: *secondly*, against the covenant they are under, and the light they are guided by, before the beams of the Gospel shine upon them. Now in these generally all are ° equal, all having sinned and come short of the glory of God: and in particular sins against the law and light of nature, no nations have gone farther than they which were soonest enlightened with the Word, as afterwards will appear: so that the sole cause of this, is the good pleasure of God, as our Saviour affirmeth, *Mat. xi. 25, 26.*

2. That sins against the covenant of works, which men are under, before the Gospel comes unto them, cannot have any general demerit, that the means of life and salvation by free grace should not be imparted to them. It is true, all nations have deserved to be turned into hell, and a people that have had the truth, and detained it in ungodliness, deserve to be deprived of it: the first, by virtue of the sanction of the first broken covenant; the other, by sinning against that, which they had of the second: but that men in a fallen condition, and not able to rise, should hereby deserve not to be helped up, needeth some distinction to clear it.

There is then a twofold demerit and indignity: one merely negative, or a not deserving to have good done unto us: the other positive, deserving that good should not be done unto us. The first of these is found in all the world, in respect of the dispensation of the Gospel. If the Lord should bestow it only on those who do not deserve it, he must forever keep it closed up in the eternal treasure of his own bosom: the second is found directly in none, in respect of that peculiar way which is discovered in the Gospel, because they had not sinned against it: which rightly considered, gives no small lustre to the freedom of grace.

3. That there is a right in the Gospel, and a fitness in that gracious dispensation to be made known to all people in the world; that no singular portion of the earth should be any longer an holy land, or any mountain of the world lift up its head above its fellows. And this right hath a double foundation.

(1.) The infinite value and worth of the blood of Christ, giving a fulness and fitness to the promises founded thereon, to be propounded to all mankind: *For through his blood, remission of sins is preached to whosoever believes on him, Acts x. 43. to every creature, Mat. xvi. 15.* God would have a price of that infinite value for sin laid down, as might justly give advantage, to proclaim a pardon indefinitely to all that will come in and accept of it, there being in it no defect at all (though intentionally only a ransom for some) but that by it, *the world might know that he had done whatsoever the Father commanded him, John xiv. 31.*

(2.) In that œconomy and dispensation of the grace of the new covenant, breaking forth in these latter days, whereby all external distinction of places and persons, people and nations being removed, Jesus Christ taketh all nations to be his inheritance, dispensing to all men the grace of the Gospel, bringing salvation, as seemeth best to him, *Tit. ii. 11, 12.* For being lifted up, he drew all unto him, having redeemed us with his blood, *out of every kindred and tongue, people and nation, Apoc. v. 9.* And on these two grounds it is that the Gospel hath in itself a right and fitness to be preached to all, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

These things being premised, I come to the proof of the assertion.

Deut. vii. 7, 8. Moses is very careful in sundry places to get this to take an impression upon their spirits, that it was mere free grace that exalted them into that condition and dignity wherein they stood, by their approach unto God, in the enjoyment of his ordinances: in this most clearly rendring the cause of God's love in choosing them, mentioned *ver. 7.* to be only his love, *ver. 8.* his love towards them is the cause of his love, his free love eternally determining his free love actually conferring those distinguishing mercies upon them: it was not for their righteousness, *for they were a stiffnecked people, Deut. vi. 6.*

Mat. xi. 25, 26. Our Saviour laying both these things together, the hiding of the mysteries of salvation from some, and revealing them to others, renders the same reason and supreme cause of both, of which no account can be rendred, only the good pleasure of God: *I thank thee, Father.* And if any will proceed higher, and

° 1 Cor. i. 25, 26.

John xvii. 22. Rom. i. 5.

° Acts xiv. 16, 17. chap. xvii. 30, 31.

Rom. xvi. 26.

° Rom. ix. 13.

° Rom. viii. 32. Joel ii. 28.

° Ephes. iii. 14, 15. Mat. xxviii. 19.

say, Where is the justice of this, that men equally obnoxious, should be thus unequally accepted? We say with *Paul*, *That he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* And who art thou, O man, that disputest against God? *Si tu es homo, & ego homo, audiamus dicentem, O homo, Tu quis?* To send a pardon to some that are condemned, suffering the rest to suffer, hath no injustice. If this will not satisfy, let us say with the same Apostle, *ὁ βάθος;* Rom. xi. 33. *O the depth &c!*

Yea, so far is it from truth, that God should dispense, and grant his word and means of grace, by any other rule, or upon any other motive than his own will and good pleasure, that we find in the Scripture the direct contrary to what we would suppose; even mercy shewed to the more unworthy, and the more worthy passed by, reckoning worthiness and unworthiness by less or greater sin, with less or more endeavours. Christ preaches to *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida* which would not repent, and at the same time denies the word to *Tyre* and *Zidon*, which would have gotten on sackcloth and ashes, when the other continued delicate despisers, *Mat* xi. 21. *Ezekiel* is sent to them that would not hear him, passing by them that would have hearkned, *chap.* iii. 5. Which is most clear, *Rom.* ix. 30, 31. *The Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, have not attained to it.* If in the dispensation of the Gospel the Lord had had any respect to the desert of people, *Corinth*, that famous place of sinning, had not so soon enjoyed it, the people whereof, for worship, were led away with dumb idols, *2 Cor.* xii. 2. and for their lives, you have them drawn to the life, *1 Cor.* vi. 9, 10, 11. *Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners,* καὶ τὰ ὅσα τούτοις ἦτε, which is to be repeated, ἀπὸ τῶ νόμου, *some of you were fornicators, some idolaters, but ye are sanctified.* Seem not these to the eye of flesh goodly qualifications for the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Had these men been dealt withal according as they had disposed themselves, not fitter fuel for hell could the justice of God require: but yet ye see, to these the Gospel comes, with the first *a light shines to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.*

If God send or grant the Gospel, which is the means of grace, upon any other ground, but his mere good pleasure, then it must be an act of remunerative justice. Now there is no such justice in God towards the creature, but what is founded upon some preceding covenant, or with promise of God to the creature, which is the only foundation of all relation between God and man; but only those that attend creation and sovereignty. Now what promise do you find made to, or covenant with a people, as yet without the Gospel: I mean conditional promises, inferring any good to be bestowed on any required performance on their part? Free, absolute promises there are innumerable, that light should shine to them that were in darkness; and those be called God's people which were not his people; but such as depend on any condition on their part to be fulfilled, we find none. God ^a bargains not with the creature about the Gospel, knowing how unable he is to be merchant for such pearls. If a man had all that goodness which may be found in man, without Jesus Christ, they would not in the least measure procure a discovery of him.

I deny not but God may, and perhaps sometimes doth reveal himself to some in a peculiar and extraordinary manner. Whereunto tends that story in ^r *Aquinas*, of a corps taken up in the days of *Constantine* and *Irene*, with a plate of gold, and this inscription on it, *Christus nascetur ex virgine, ego credo in illum. O sol sub Irene & Constantini temporibus iterum me videbis.* But that this should be regular unto men living, μετα' λόγου, in *Justin Martyr's* phrase, ² or using their naturals aright (which is impossible they should, the right use of naturals depending on supernaturals) is wide from the word.

^a August.

^v Si hoc voluntatum meritis voluimus ascribere, ut malos neglexisset gratia bonos elegisset videatur, resistit vobis immemorabilem causam populorum, quibus per tot secula, celestis doctrine annuntiatio non corrumpitur, nec meliores fuisse eorum posteros possimus dicere, quibus suspensus est, Gentium populus qui sedebat in tenebris, lucem vidit magnam, Prosp. de voc. Gen. lib. 1. cap. 15.

^u Si de debito quaratur respectu creature, in Deum cadere non potest, nisi ex aliqua suppositione ipsi Deo voluntatis, qua non potest esse nisi promissio aut pactio aliqua, ex quibus fidelitatis aut justitiae debitum oriri solet. Suarez. de libert. div. vol. disp. 1. sect. 2. num. 5.

² Deus nulla obligatione tenetur, antequam ipse fidem suam astringat, ergo ante promissionem nulla justitia distribuita in Deo reperitur. Valsq. in q. 21. a. 1. disp. 86.

^r Aquin. 2. 2. q. 2. art. 7.

² Καὶ οἱ μετα' λόγου βιόσωντες χριστιανοὶ ἵερ. Justin. Apol. 2.

If there be any outward motive of granting the Gospel unto any, it is some acceptable performances of theirs, holding up to the rule and will of God. Now this will and rule having no saving revelation but by the Gospel, which should thus be procured by acts agreeable unto it, makes up a flat contradiction; supposing the revelation of the Gospel, before it be revealed. Doubtless according to all rules of justice to us made known, it is an easier thing to deserve heaven by obedience now under the covenant of works, than being under that covenant, to do any thing that might cause a new way of salvation, such as the Gospel is, to be revealed.

With some observations I descend to application.

[1.] There is the same reason of continuing the Gospel unto a people, as of sending it; especially if oppositions rise high, apt and able in themselves for its removal. Never nation as yet enjoyed the word, that deserved the continuance of the word. God hath always^a something against a people to make the continuing of his grace to be of grace, the not removing of his love to be merely of love, and the preaching of the Gospel to be a mercy of the Gospel, free and undeserved. Though there be work, and labour, and patience for Christ's sake at *Ephesus*, yet there is somewhat against *Ephesus*, Rev. ii. 4, 5. for which he might justly remove his candlestick; and if he doth it not, it is of the same mercy that first set it there. As God lays out goodness and grace in the entrance, so patience, long-suffering, and forbearance in the continuance. He bears with our manners, whilst we grieve his spirit. Look upon the face of this kingdom, and view the body of the people, think of the profaness, villany, trampling upon the blood of Jesus, ignorance, contempt of God and his ways, despising his ordinances, reviling his servants, branding and defaming the power of godliness, persecuting and tearing one another, and yet hear the joyful sound of the word in every corner; and you will quickly conclude, that you see a great fight of God's love against our sins, and not of our goodness for his love.

[2.] There is the same reason of the reformation and the doctrine of the Gospel corrupted with error, and of the worship of God collapsed with superstition, as of the first implantation of the Gospel. God in his just judgment of late ages, had sent upon the western world the efficacy of error, that *they should believe lies, because they received not the love of the truth*, as he fore-told, 2 *Thef.* ii. Now whence is it, that we see some of the nations thereof as yet suffered to walk in their own ways, others called to repentance, some wildernesses turned into green pastures for the flock of God, and some places made barren wildernesses for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? How comes it that this island glories in a reformation, and *Spain* sits still in darkness? Is it because we were better than they? Or less engaged in antichristian delusions? Doubtless no. No nation in the world drank deeper of that cup of abomination. It was a proverbial speech amongst all: *England was our good ass* (a beast of burden) for (antichrist whom they called) the pope. Nothing but the good pleasure of God and Christ freely coming to refine us, *Mal.* iii. 1, 2, 3, 4. caused this distinction.

[3.] Though men can do nothing towards the procuring of the Gospel, yet men may do much for the expulsion of the Gospel. If the husbandmen prove idle or self-seekers, the vineyard will be let to others; and if the people love darkness more than light, the candlestick will be removed: let *England* beware. Now this men may do, either upon the first entrance of the Gospel, or after some continuance of it. The Gospel spreading itself over the earth, finds entertainment, like that of mens seeking plantations amongst barbarous nations; sometimes kept out with hideous outcries at the shore, sometimes suffered to enter with admiration, and a little after violently assaulted.

1.) In the first way, how do we find the *Jews*, putting far from them the word of life, and rejecting the counsel of God at its first entrance, calling for night at the rising of the sun? Hence, *Acts* xiii. 41. *Paul* concludes his sermon to them, with, *Hear, ye despisers, wonder and perish*: and ver. 46. it was necessary the word should be preached to them, but seeing they judged themselves unworthy, they were forsaken: and ver. 51. they shake off the dust of their feet against them: a common symbol in those days of the highest indignation, and deepest curse. The like stubbornness we

^a Hof. xi. 8, 9.

find in them, *Acts* xxviii. whereupon the Apostle wholly turned himself to the *Gentiles*, ver. 28. How many nations of *Europe*, at the beginning of the reformation, rejected the Gospel of God, and procured Christ, with the *Gadarens*, to depart as soon as he was entered, will be found at the last day, written with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, that suffered amongst them?

2.) After some continuance. So the Church of *Laodicea*, having for a while enjoyed the word, fell into such a tepid condition, so little moved with that fire that Christ came to send upon the earth, *Rev.* iii. 15, 16. that the Lord was even sick and weary with bearing them. The Church of *Rome*, famous at the first, yet quickly, by the advantage of outward supportments, and glorious fancies, became head of that fatal rebellion against Jesus Christ, which spread itself over most of the Churches in the world; God hereupon sending upon them the efficacy of error to believe a lie, that they all might be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, 2 *Thes.* ii. suffering them to detain the empty names of Church and Gospel, which because they usurp, only for their advantage here, to appear glorious, the Lord will use for the advancing of his justice hereafter, to shew them inexcusable. O Lord, how was *England* of late by thy mercy delivered from this snare! A captain being chosen for the return of this people into *Egypt*, oh, how hath thy grace fought against our backsliding! And let none seek to extenuate this mercy, by catalogues of errors still amongst us, there is more danger of apostasy against Christ, and rebellion against the truth, in one babylonish error, owned by men pretending to power and jurisdiction over others, than in five hundred scattered amongst inconsiderable disunited individuals. I would to God we could all speak and think the same things, that we were all of one mind, even in the most minutulous differences that are now amongst us. But yet the truth is, the kingdom of Jesus Christ never shakes amongst a people, until men pretending to act with a combined mixed power of heaven and earth, unto which all sheaves must bow, or be threshed, do, by virtue of this trust, set up and impose things, or opinions deviating from the rule; as it was in the papacy, errors owned by mixed associations. Civil and ecclesiastical are for the most part incurable, be they never so absurd and foolish; of which the *Lutheran* ubiquities and *consubstantiation* are a tremendous example. These things being presupposed,

Use. 1. Let no flesh glory in themselves, but let every mouth be stopped; for we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. Who hath made the possessors of the Gospel to differ from others? Or what have they, that they have not received? 1 *Cor.* iv. 7. Why are these things hidden from the great and wise of the world, and revealed to babes and children, but because, O Father, so it pleased thee? *Mat.* xi. 26. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth, *Rom.* ix. Ah Lord, if the glory and pomp of the world might prevail with thee to send thy Gospel, it would supply the room of the cursed *Alchoran*, and spread itself in the palaces of that strong lion of the east, who sets his throne upon the necks of kings. But alas, Jesus Christ is not there! If wisdom, learning, pretended gravity, counterfeit holiness, real policy were of any value in thine eyes to procure the word of life, it would be as free and glorious at *Rome* as ever: but alas, antichrist hath his throne there, Jesus Christ is not there! If will-worship and humilities, neglect of the body, macerations, superstitions, beads, and vainly repeated prayers had any efficacy before the Lord, the Gospel perhaps might be in the cells of some recluses and monks: but alas, Jesus Christ is not there! If moral virtues to an amazement, exact civil honesty and justice, that soul of humane society, could have prevailed ought, the heathen worthies in the days of old had had the promises: but alas, Jesus Christ was far away! Now if all these be passed by, to whom is the report of the Lord made known? to whom is his arm revealed? Why, to an handful of poor sinners amongst the nations formerly counted fierce and barbarous. And what shall we say to these things? O *βδδδ*, O the depth &c.

Use 2. Let *England* consider with fear and trembling the dispensation that it is now under: I say, with fear and trembling, for this day is the Lord's day, wherein

* Νῦν δὲ ἐστὶν ἀποκαταλῆ, ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας. *Cyrillus Hieros. κατὰ χρονία.*

* *Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita. Tertul.*

he will purge us, or burn us, according as we shall be found silver or dross: it is our day, wherein we must mend or end. Let us look to the rock from whence we were hewed, and the hole of the pit from whence we were digged. Was not our father an *Amorite*, and our mother an *Hittite*? Are we not the posterity of idolatrous ^d progenitors? of those who worshipped them who by nature were no gods? How often also hath this land forfeited the Gospel? God having taken it twice away, who is not forward to seize upon the forfeiture. In the very morning of the Gospel, the sun of righteousness shone upon this land; and they say the first potentate on the earth that owned it, was in *Britain*^e: but as it was here soon professed, so it was here soon abused. That part of this isle which is called *England* being the first place I read of, which was totally bereaved of the Gospel, the sword of the then *pagan Saxons* fattening the land with the blood of the Christian inhabitants^f, and in the close wholly subverting the worship of God. Long it was not e'er this cloud was blown over, and those men who had been instruments to root out others, submitted their own necks to the yoke of the Lord, and under exceeding variety in civil affairs, enjoyed the word of grace; until by insensible degrees, like summer unto winter, or light unto darkness, it gave place to antichristian superstition, and left the land in little less than a paganish darkness, drinking deep of the cup of abominations, mingled for it by the *Roman* harlot. And is there mercy yet in God to recover a twice lost over backsliding people? Might not the Lord have said unto us, What shall I do unto thee, oh island? How shall I make thee as *Admah*? How shall I set thee as *Zeboim*? But his heart is turned within him, his repentings are kindled together: the dry bones shall live, and the fleece shall be wet, though all the earth be dry. God will again water his garden, once more purge his vineyard, once more of his own accord he will take *England* upon liking, though he had twice deservedly turned it out of his service. So that *coming as a refiner's fire, and as fuller's soap, to purify the sons of Levi, to purge them as gold and silver, to offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness*, to reform his Churches, *England*, as soon as any, hath the benefit and comfort thereof. Nay, the reformation of *England* shall be more glorious than of any nation in the world, being carried on neither by might nor power, but only by the spirit of the Lord of hosts. But is this the utmost period of *England's* sinning, and God's shewing mercy, in continuing and restoring of the Gospel? No truly: we again in our days have made forfeiture of the purity of his worship, by an almost universal treacherous apostasy, from which the free grace and good pleasure of God hath made a great progress again towards a recovery.

There are two sorts of men that I find exceedingly ready to extenuate and lessen the superstition and popish tyranny of the former days, into which we were falling.

(1.) Such as were industriously instrumental in it, whose suffrages had been loud, for the choice of a captain to return into *Egypt*; men tainted with the errors, and loaded with the preferments of the times; with all those who blindly adhere to that faction of men, who as yet covertly drive on that design: to such as these, all was nothing, and to them it is no macrey to be delivered. And the truth is, it is a favour to the lamb, and not the wolf, to have him taken out of his mouth: but these men have interest by those things which have no ears, against which there is no contending.

(2.) Such as are disturbed in their opticks, or have gotten false^g glasses, representing all things unto them in dubious colours: which way soever they look, they can see nothing but errors, errors of all sizes, sorts, sects, and sexes, errors and heresies from the beginning to the end; which have deceived some men, not of the worst, and made them think, that all before was nothing, in comparison of the present confusion. A great sign they felt it not, or were not troubled at it: as if men should come into a field, and seeing some red weeds and cockle among the corn, should instantly affirm, there is no corn there, but all weeds, and that it were much better the hedges were down, and the whole field laid open to the boar of the forest:

^d *Britanniam in Christianam convertire religionem*, Origen. Hom. 4. in Ezek.

^e Niceph. lib. 2. cap. 40. Epist. Eleuth. ad Lucium, an. 169. apud Bar.

^f Anno 469. the Saxons entred.

^g *Nunc igitur si nominis odium est, quis nominum ventus? qua accusatio vocabulorum? nisi aut barbarum sonat aliqua vox nominis, aut maledicum aut impudicum.* Tertul. Apol. ad Gen. cap. 3.

but the harvest will one day shew the truth of these things. But that these apprehensions may not too much prevail, to the vilifying and extenuating of God's mercy, in restoring to us the purity and liberty of the Gospel, give me leave in a few words to set out the danger of that apostasy, from which the good pleasure of God hath given us a deliverance. I shall instance only in a few things. Observe then that

[1.] The darling errors of late years were all of them stones of the old *Babel*, closing and coupling with that tremendous fabrick, which the man of sin had erected to dethrone Jesus Christ: came out of the belly of that *Trojan* horse, that fatal engine, which was framed to betray the city of God. They were popish errors, such as whereof that apostasy did consist, which only is to be looked upon as the great adverse state to the kingdom of the Lord Christ. For a man to be disorderly in a civil state, yea oftentimes through turbulence to break the peace, is nothing to an underhand combination with some formidable enemy, for the utter subversion of it. Heedless and headless errors may breed disturbance enough, in scattered individuals, unto the people of God; but such as tend to a peace and association, *cum ecclesia malignantium*, tending to a total subversion of the sacred state, are far more dangerous. Now such were the innovations of the late hierarchists. In worship their paintings, ^h croppings, crucifixes, bowings, cringings, altars, tapers, wafers, organs, anthems, litany, rails, images, copes, vestments, what were they but *Roman* varnish, an *Italian* dress for our devotion, to draw on conformity with that enemy of the Lord Jesus? In doctrine, the divinity of episcopacy, auricular confession, freewill, predestination on faith, yea works foreseen, *limbus patrum*, justification by works, falling from grace, authority of a Church, which none knew what it was, canonical obedience, holiness of Churches, and the like innumerable, what were they but helps to *Sancta Clara*, to make all our articles of religion speak good Roman Catholick? How did their old Father of *Rome* refresh his spirit, to see such chariots as those provided to bring *England* again unto him? This closing with popery was the sting in the errors of those days, which cause pining, if not death in the episcopal pot.

[2.] They were such as raked up the ashes of the ancient worthies, whose spirits God stirred up to reform his Church, and rendred them contemptible before all, especially those of *England*, the most whereof died in giving their witness against the blind figment of the real presence, ⁱ and that abominable blasphemy of the cursed mass. In especial, how did *England*, heretofore termed ass, turn ape to the pope, having set up a stage, and furnished it with all things necessary for an unbloody sacrifice, ^k ready to set up the abomination of a desolation, and close with the god *Maozim*, who hath all their peculiar devotion at *Rome*?

[3.] They were in the management of men which had divers dangerous and pernicious qualifications: as

1.) A false repute of learning; I say, a false repute for the greater part, especially of the greatest; and yet taking advantages of vulgar esteem, they bare out as though they had engrossed a monopoly of it: though I presume the world was never deceived by more empty pretenders, especially in respect of any solid knowledge in divinity or antiquity: but yet their great preferments had got them a great repute of great deservings, enough to blind the eyes of poor mortals adoring them at a distance, and to persuade them, that all was not only law, but Gospel too, which they broached: and this rendred the infection dangerous.

2.) A great hatred of godliness in the power thereof, or any thing beyond a form, in whomsoever it was found; yea, how many ^l odious appellations were invented for bare profession, to render it contemptible? Especially in the exercise of their jurisdiction, thundring their censures against all appearance of zeal, and closing with all profane impieties; for were a man a drunkard, a swearer, a sabbath-breaker, an unclean person, so he were no puritan, and had money, *patet atri janua ditis*, the episcopal heaven was open for them all. Now this was a dangerous and destructive qualification, which I believe is not professedly found in any party amongst us.

^h See *Canterburian self-conviction*. See *Ld. Dee. Coll.* &c.

ⁱ Coal from the altar.

^k *Altare Christianum*. *Antidotum* Lincoln. Case of Greg.

^l *Sapientior sis Socrate; doctior Augustino*, &c. *Calvinianus si modo dicere clam vel propalam, mox Turcarum, Moscorum, Afris Turcisque favientibus & jacobis execrator*, &c.

3.) Which was worst of all, they had centred in their bosoms an unfathomable depth of power, civil and ecclesiastical, to stamp their apostatical errors with authority, giving them not only the countenance of greatness, but the strength of power, violently urging obedience; and to me the sword of error never cuts dangerously, but when it is managed with such an hand. This I am sure, that errors in such are not recoverable, without the utmost danger of the civil state.

Let now, I beseech you, these and the like things be considered, especially the strong combination that was throughout the ^m papal world for the seducing of this poor nation (that I say nothing, how this vial was poured out upon the very ⁿ throne) and then let us all be ashamed and confounded in ourselves, that we should so undervalue and slight the free mercy of God in breaking such a snare, and setting the Gospel at liberty in *England*. My intent was, having before asserted this restoration of *Jerusalem* to the good pleasure of God, to have stirred you up to thankfulness unto him, and self-humiliation in consideration of our great undeserving of such mercy; but alas! as far as I can see, it will scarce pass for a mercy; and unless every man's persuasion may be a *Joseph's* sheaf, the goodness of God shall scarce be acknowledged. But yet let all the world know, and let the house of *England* know this day, that we lie unthankfully under as full a dispensation of mercy and grace, as ever nation in the world enjoyed, and that without a lively acknowledgment thereof, with our own unworthiness of it, we shall one day know what it is (being taught with briars and thorns) to undervalue the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus. Good Lord! what would helpless *Macedonians* give for one enjoyment? O that *Wales*! O that *Ireland*! O that *France*! Where shall I stop? I would offend none, but give me leave to say, O that every, I had almost said, O that any part of the world had such helps and means of grace, as these parts of *England* have, which will scarce acknowledge any mercy in it! The Lord break the pride of our spirits, before it break the staff of our bread, and the help of our salvation. O that the bread of heaven, and the blood of Christ might be accounted good nourishment, though every one hath not the sauce he desireth. I am persuaded that if every *Absalom* in the land, that would be a judge for the ending of our differences, were enthroned (he spoke the peoples good, though he intended his own power) the case would not be much better than it is. Well, the Lord make *England*, make this honourable audience, make us all to know these three things:

(1. That we have received such a blessing in setting at liberty the truths of the Gospel, as is the crown of all other mercies, yea, without which they were not valuable, yea were to be despised: for success without the Gospel is nothing but a prosperous conspiracy against Jesus Christ.

(2. That this mercy is of mercy, this love of free love, and the grace that appeareth of the eternal hidden free grace of God. He hath shewed his love unto us because he loved us, and for no other reason in the world, this people being guilty of blood and murder of soul and body, adultery, and idolatry, and oppression, with a long catalogue of sins and iniquities.

(3. That the height of rebellion against God is the despising of spiritual Gospel-mercies. Should *Mordecai* have troden the robes under his feet that were brought him from the king, would it not have been severely revenged? Doth the King of heaven lay open the treasures of his wisdom, knowledge, and goodness for us, and we despise them? What shall I say? I had almost said, hell punishes no greater sin: the Lord lay it not to our charge. O that we might be solemnly humbled for it this day, before it be too late!

Use 3. To discover unto us the freedom of that effectual grace which is dispensed towards the elect, under and with the preaching of the word: for if the sending of the outward means be of free ^o undeserved love, surely the working of the spirit under that dispensation, for the saving of souls, is no less free: for, *who hath made us differ from others, and what have we that we have not received?* O that God should say unto us in our blood, live; that he should breath upon us when we were as dry bones, dead in trespasses and sins! Let us remember, I beseech you, the frame

^m Rome's Masterpiece.

ⁿ Royal Favourite.

^o Non libertate gratiam, sed gratia libertatem consequimur. Aug.

of our hearts, and the temper of our spirits, in the days wherein we knew not God, and his goodness, but went on in a ^p swift course of rebellion. Can none of you look back upon any particular days or nights, and say, Ah Lord, that thou shouldst be so patient, and so full of forbearance, as not to send me to hell at such an instant! But, oh Lord, that thou shouldst go farther, and blot out mine iniquities for thine own sake, *when I made thee serve with my sins*: Lord, what shall I say it is! It is the free grace of my God. What expression transcendeth that, I know not.

Use 4. Of caution. *England* received the Gospel of mere mercy, let it take heed lest it lose it by justice; the placer of the candlestick can remove it; the truth is, it will not be removed, unless it be abused; and wo to them from whom mercies are taken for being abused, from whom the Gospel is removed for being despised. It had been better for the husbandmen never to have had the vineyard, than to be slain for their ill using of it: there is nothing left to do them good, who are forsaken for forsaking the Gospel.

The glory of God was of late by many degrees departing from the temple in our land. That was gone to the threshold, yea to the mount: if now at the return thereof, it find again cause to depart, it will not go by steps, but all at once. This island, or at least the greatest part thereof, as I formerly intimated, hath twice lost the Gospel; once, when the *Saxons* wrested it from the *Britains*, when, if we may believe their own doleful moaning ^a historian, they were given over to all wickedness, oppression, and villany of life, which doubtless was accompanied with contempt of the word; though for faith and persuasion we do not find that they were corrupted, and do find that they were tenacious enough of antique discipline, as appeared in their following oppositions to the Roman tyranny, as in *Beda*. Secondly, It was lost in regard of the purity and power thereof, by blind superstition and anti-christian impiety, accompanied also with abominable lewdness, oppression, and all manner of sin, in the face of the sun, so that first profaneness working a despising of the Gospel, then superstition ushering in profaneness, have in this land shewed their power for the extirpation of the Gospel. Oh, that we could remember the days of old, that we could consider the goodness and severity of God, on them which fell severity, but towards us goodness, if we continue in that goodness, for otherwise even we also shall be cut off! Yet here we may observe, that though both these times there was a forsaking in the midst of the land, yet there was in it a tenth for to return as a teil-tree, and as an oak whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves, so was the holy seed and the substance thereof, Isa. vi. 13. As in the dereliction of the *Jews*, so of this nation, there was a remnant that quickly took root, and brought forth fruit, both in the one devastation, and the other: though the watcher, and the holy one from heaven, had called to cut down the tree of this nation, and to scatter its branches from flourishing before him; yet the stump and root was to be left in the earth with a band of iron, that it might spring again. Thus twice did the Lord come seeking fruit of this vine, doing little more than pruning and dressing it, although it brought forth wild grapes; but if he come the third time and find no fruit, the sentence will be, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* Now to prevent this I shall not follow all those Gospel supplanting sins we find in Holy Writ, only I desire to cautionate you and us all in three things.

(1.) Take heed of pretending or holding out the Gospel for a covert or shadow for other things. God will not have his Gospel made a stalking-horse for carnal designs: put not in that glorious name, where the thing itself is not clearly intended; if in any thing it be, let it have no compeer; if not, let it not be named; if that you aim at be just, it needs no varnish; if it be not, it is the worse for it. Gilded pills lose not their bitterness, and painted faces are thought to have no native beauty; all things in the world should serve the Gospel, and if that be made to serve other things, God will quickly vindicate it into liberty.

From the beginning of these troubles, Right Honourable, you have held forth religion and the Gospel, as whose preservation and restoration was principally in the aims, and I presume malice itself is not able to discover any insincerity in this, the

^p Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Acts xvi. 14. Phil. i. 29. and ii. 13.

^a Gildas de Excid. Britannia, Omnia quae Deo placebant & displicebant, aequali lance pendebantur, non igitur admirandum est degeneres tales patriam illam amittere, quam praedicto modo maculabant. Hist. M. S. apud Foxum.

fruits we behold proclaim to all the conformity of your words and hearts. Now the God of heaven grant that the same mind be in you still, in every particular member of this honourable assembly, in the whole nation, especially in the magistracy and ministry of it; that we be not like the boatmen, look one way, and row another; cry Gospel, and mean the other thing; Lord, Lord, and advance our own ends; that the Lord may not stir up the staff of his anger, and the rod of his indignation against us as an hypocritical people.

(2.) Take heed of resting upon, and trusting to the privilege, however excellent and glorious, of the outward enjoyment of the Gospel. When the Jews cried, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*, the time was at hand that they should be destroyed. Look only upon the grace that did bestow, and the mercy that doth continue it; God will have none of his blessings rob him of his glory, and if we will rest at the cistern, he will stop at the fountain.

(3.) Let us all take heed of barrenness under it: *For the earth that drinks in the rain that cometh upon it, and beareth thorns and briars, is rejected, and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned*, Heb. vi. 7, 8. Now what fruits doth it require? Even those reckoned Gal. v. 22, 23. *The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*. Oh, that we had not cause to grieve for a scarcity of these fruits, and the abundant plenty of those works of the flesh recounted, ver. 19, 20, 21! Oh that that wisdom, which is an eminent fruit of the Gospel, might flourish amongst us! It is first *pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, that we might have less writing, and more praying; less envy, and more charity; that all evil surmisings, which are works of the flesh, might have no toleration in our hearts, but be banished for nonconformity to the golden rule of love and peace*, Jam. iii. 17. But ἀπὸ. Come we now to the last proposition.

III. No men in the world want help, like them that want the Gospel. Or, of all distresses, want of the Gospel cries loudest for relief.

Rachel wanted children, and she cries, Give me ^r children, or I die: but that was but her impatience, she might have lived, and have had no children; yea, see the justice of God, she dies so soon as ever she hath children. *Hagar* ^r wants water for *Ismael*, and she will go far from him, that she may not see him die; an heavy distress; and yet if he had died, it had been but an early paying of that debt, which in a few years was to be satisfied. But they that want the Gospel may truly cry, Give us the Gospel, or we die, and that not temporally with *Ismael*, for want of water, but eternally in flames of fire.

A man may want liberty, and yet be happy, as *Joseph* was; a man may want peace, and yet be happy, as *David* was; a man may want children, and yet be blessed, as *Job* was; a man may want plenty, and yet be full of comfort, as *Micaiah* was: but he that wants the Gospel, wants every thing that should do him good. A throne without the Gospel is but the devil's dungeon. Wealth without the Gospel is fuel for hell. Advancement without the Gospel is but a going high to have the greater fall.

Abraham ^r wanting a child, complains. What will the Lord do for me, seeing I go childless, and this *Eliezer* of *Damascus* must be my heir? Much more may a man without the means of grace complain, What shall be done unto me, seeing I go Gospelleless; and all that I have is but a short inheritance for this lump of clay, my body?

When *Elisha* was minded to do something for the *Shunammite* who had so kindly entertained him; he asks her, whether he should speak for her to the king, or the captain of the host. She replies, she dwelt in the midst of her own people, she needeth not those things; but when he finds her to want a child, and tells her of that, she is almost transported. Ah, how many poor souls are there, who need not our word to the king or the captain of the host; but yet being Gospelleless, if you could tell them of that, would be even ravished with joy?

Think of *Adam* ^r after his fall, before the promise, hiding himself from God, and you have a perfect pourtraiture of a poor creature without the Gospel. Now this appeareth,

^r Gen. xxx. 1. Gen. xxxv. 18.

^r Gen. iii. 8.

^r Gen. xxi. 16.

^r Gen. xv. 2.

^r 2 Kings iv. 13, 14.

1. From the description we have of the people that are in this ^{*} state and condition without the Gospel; they are a people that sit in darkness, yea in the region and shadow of death, *Matth.* iv. 16, 17. they are even darkness itself, *Joh.* i. 7. within the dominion and dreadful darkness of death. Darkness was one of *Egypt's* plagues, but yet that was a darkness of the body, a darkness wherein men lived; but this is a darkness of the soul, a darkness of death, for these men though they live, yet are they dead. They are fully described, *Ephes.* ii. 12. *without Christ, aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.* Christless men, and godless men, and hopeless men: and what greater distress in the world? Yea, they are called dogs, and unclean beasts, the wrath of God is upon them, they are the people of his curse and indignation. In the extreme *North* one day and one night divide the year; but with a people without the Gospel it is all night, the sun of righteousness shines not upon them; it is night whilst they are here, and they go to eternal night hereafter. What the men of *China* say concerning themselves and others, that they have two eyes, the men of *Europe* one, and all the world besides is blind, may be inverted too; the *Jews* had one eye, sufficient to guide them, they who enjoy the Gospel have two eyes, but the men of *China*, with the rest of the nations that want it, are stark blind, and reserved for the chains of everlasting darkness.

2. By laying forth what the men that want the Gospel do want with it.

(1.) They want Jesus Christ, for he is revealed only by the Gospel. *Austin* refused to delight in *Cicero's Hortensius*, because there was not in it the [†] name of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is all and in all, and where he is wanting, there can be no good. Hunger cannot truly be satisfied without manna, the bread of life, which is [‡] Jesus Christ: and what shall a hungry man do that hath no bread? Thirst cannot be quenched without that water or living spring, which is Jesus Christ: and what shall a thirsty soul do without water? A captive as we are all, cannot be delivered without redemption [§], which is Jesus Christ: and what shall the prisoner do without his ransom? Fools as we are, all cannot be instructed without wisdom, which is Jesus Christ, without him we perish in our folly. All building without him is on the sand, which will surely fall. All working without him is in the fire, where it will be consumed. All riches without him have wings, and will away. *Mallem ruere cum Christo, quam regnare cum Cesare*, said *Luther*. A dungeon with Christ, is a throne; and a throne without Christ, a hell. Nothing so ill, but ^b Christ will compensate. The greatest evil in the world is sin, and the greatest sin was the first; and yet *Gregory* feared not to cry, *O felix culpa, quæ talem meruit redemptorem! Ob happy fault which found such a Redeemer!* All mercies without Christ are bitter, and every cup is sweet that is seasoned but with a drop of his blood: he truly is *amor & delitie humani generis*, the love and delight of the sons of men, without whom they must perish eternally: *for there is no other name given unto them, whereby they may be saved*, *Acts* iv. He is the ^c way; men without him are *Cains*, wanderers, vagabonds: he is the truth; men without him are liars, like the Devil, who was so of old: he ^d is the life; without him men are dead, dead in trespasses and sins: he is the light; without him men are in darkness, and go they know not whither: he is the vine; those that are not grafted in him, are withered branches, prepared for the fire: he is the rock; men not built on him, are carried away with a flood: he is *alpha* and *omega*, the first and the last, the author and the ender, the founder and the finisher of our salvation; he that hath not him, hath neither beginning of good, nor shall have end of misery. O blessed Jesus, how much better were it, not to be, than to be without thee! Never to be born, than not to die in thee! A thousand hells come short of this, eternally to want Jesus Christ, as men do that want the Gospel.

(2.) They want all holy communion with God, wherein the only happiness of the soul doth consist. He is the life, light, joy, and blessedness of the soul: without him, the soul in the body is but a dead soul, in a living sepulchre. It is true,

^{*} *Matth.* vi. 23. *Luke* i. 79. *Acts* xxvi. 18. *Rom.* ii. 19. *Ephes.* v. 8. *Col.* i. 13. *1 Pet.* i. 9.

[†] *Nomen Jesu non erat ibi.*

[‡] *Joh.* vii. 37, 38. *1 Cor.* i. 30.

[§] *Joh.* i. 3, 4, 5. *Ephes.* iv. 18. *Matth.* vii. 26, 27. *Matth.* xvi. 18.

^a *Joh.* vi. 50. *Rev.* ii. 17. *John* iv. 14.

^b *Pauca igitur de Christo.* *Tertul.*

^c *Joh.* xv. 5.

there be many that say, *Who will shew us any good?* but unless the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us, we perish for evermore. *Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is unquiet until it come to thee.* You who have tasted how gracious the Lord is, who have had any converse and communion with him, in the issues and goings forth of his grace, those delights of his soul with the children of men, would you live, would not life itself, with a confluence of all earthly endearments, be a very hell without him? Is it not the daily language of your hearts, *Whom have we in heaven but thee? and on earth there is nothing in comparison of thee?* The soul of man is of a vast, boundless comprehension, so that if all created good were centred into one enjoyment, and that bestowed upon one soul, because it must needs be finite and limited, as created, it would give no solid contentment to his affections, nor satisfaction to his desires. In the presence and fruition of God alone there is joy for evermore; at his right hand are rivers of pleasure, the well-springs of life and blessedness. Now, if to be without communion with God in this life, wherein the soul hath so many avocations from the contemplation of its own misery (for earthly things are nothing else) is so unsupportable a calamity; ah, what shall that poor soul do that must want him for eternity, as all they must do, who want the Gospel!

(3.) They want all the ordinances of God, the joy of our ^f hearts, and comfort of our souls. Oh, the sweetness of a sabbath! The heavenly raptures of prayer! Oh, the glorious communion of saints, which such men are deprived of! If they knew the value of the hidden pearl, and these things were to be purchased, what would such poor souls not part with for them?

(4.) They will at last want heaven and salvation; they shall never come to the presence of God in glory, never inhabit a glorious mansion; they shall never behold Jesus Christ, but when they shall call for ^s rocks and mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from his presence; they shall want light in utter darkness, want life under the second death, want ^h refreshment in the midst of flames, want healing under gnawing of conscience, want grace continuing to blaspheme, want glory in full misery; and which is the sum of all this, they shall want an end of all this, for *their worm dieth not, neither is their fire quenched.*

3. Because being in all this want, they know not that they want any thing, and so never make out for any supply. *Laodicea* knew much, but yet because she knew not her wants ⁱ, she had almost as good have known nothing. Gospelless men know not that they are blind, and seek not for eye-salve: they know not that they are dead, and seek not for life. Whatever they call for, not knowing their wants, is but like a man's crying for more weight to press him to death; and therefore when the Lord comes to any with the Gospel, he is *found of them that sought him not, and made manifest to them that asked not after him*, Rom. x. 20. This is a seal upon their misery, without God's free mercy, like the stone laid upon the mouth of the cave by *Joshua*, to keep in the five kings, until they might be brought out to be hanged ^k. All that men do in the world is but seeking to supply their wants; either their natural wants, that nature may be supply'd; or their sinful wants, that their lusts may be satisfied; or their spiritual wants, that their souls may be saved. For the two first, men without the Gospel lay out all their strength, but of the last there is amongst them a deep ^m silence. Now this is all one as for men to cry out that their finger bleeds, whilst a sword is run through their hearts, and they perceive it not: to desire a wart to be cured, whilst they have a plague-fore upon them. And hence perhaps it is, that they are said to go to ⁿ hell like sheep, Psal. xlix. 14. very quietly, without dread, as a bird hasting to the snare, and not knowing that it is for his life, *Prov. vii. 23.* and there lie down in utter disappointment and sorrow for evermore.

4. Because all mercies are bitter judgments to men that want the Gospel; all fuel for hell; aggravations of condemnation; all cold drink to a man in a fever, pleasant at the entrance, but encreasing its torments in the close: like the book in the *Reve-*

* Psal. iv. 6. ^f Psal. xlii. 1, 2. ^g Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. ^h Rev. vii. 16. ⁱ Mat. xxii. 13.
 Luke xvi. 24. Mark ix. 43, 44. Isa. lxvi. 24. ^j Rev. iii. 17. ^k Josh. x. 18. ^m *Ego propero ad inferos, nec est ut aliquid pro me agas.* *Advocatus quidam moriens, apud. Bel. de arte mor. lib. 2. cap. 10.*

lation, sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly. When God shall come to require his bread and wine, his flax and oil, peace and prosperity, liberty and victories of Gospellers men, they will curse the day that ever they enjoyed them. So unspiritual are many mens minds, and so unfavoury their judgments, that they reckon mens happiness by their possessions, and suppose the catalogue of their titles to be a roll of their felicities, calling *the proud happy*, and advancing in our conceits *them that work wickedness*, Mal. iii. 15. but God will one day come in with another reckoning, and make them know, that all things without Christ, are but as cyphers without a figure, of no value. In all their banquets where Christ is not a guest, *their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the field of Gomorrah, their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter*, Deut. xxxii. 42, 33. their palaces, where Christ is not, are but habitations of *Zim*, and *Ochim*, dragons, and unclean beasts: their prosperity is but putting them into full pasture, that they may be fatted for the day of slaughter, the day of consumption decreed for all the bulls of *Bashan*: the Gospel bringing Christ, is the salt that makes all other things savoury.

Use 1. To shew us the great privilege and preeminence, which, by the free grace of God, many parts of this island do enjoy. To us that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, a great light is risen, to guide us into the ways of peace. Let others recount the glories, benefits, profits, outward blessings of this nation; let us look only upon that which alone is valuable in itself, and makes other things so to be, the Gospel of Christ. It is reported of the heralds of our neighbour monarchs, that when one of them had repeated the numerous titles of his master of *Spain*, the other often repeated *France, France, France*; intimating that the dominion which came under that one denomination, would counterpoise the long catalogue of kingdoms and dukedoms, wherewith the other flourished. Were we to contend with the Grand Seignior of the east about our enjoyments, we might easily bear down his windy, pompous train of titles with this one, which *millies repetitum placebit*, the Gospel, the Gospel. Upon all other things you may put the inscription in *Daniel*, *mene, mene, Tekel*, they are weighed in the balance, and found wanting; but proclaim before those that enjoy the Gospel, as *Haman* before *Mordecai*, *Lo, thus shall it be done to them whom the Lord will honour*. The fox in the fable had a thousand wiles to save himself from the hunters; but the cat knew *unum magnum, one great thing* that would surely do it. Earthly supports and contentments are but a thousand failing wiles, which will all vanish in the time of need; the Gospel, and Christ in the Gospel, is that *unum magnum*, that *unum necessarium*, which alone will stand us in any stead. In this, this island is as the mountain of the Lord, exalted above the mountains of the earth: it is true, many other nations partake with us in the same blessing: not to advance our own enjoyments in some particulars wherein perhaps we might justly do it; but take all these nations with us, and what a molehill are we to the whole earth, overspread with paganism, mahometanism, antichristianism, with innumerable foolish heresies? And what is *England*, that it should be amongst the choice branches of the vineyard, the top-boughs of the cedars of God?

Use 2. Shews that such great mercies, if not esteemed, if not improved, if abused, will end in great judgments. Wo be to that nation, that city, that person that shall be called to an account for despising the Gospel, *Amos ii. 2. You only have I known of all the families of the earth*. What then? Surely some great blessing is coming to that people, whom God thus knows, and so owns, as to make himself known unto them. No: but, *therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities*. However others may have some ease or mitigation in their punishments, do you expect the utmost of my wrath. *Luther* said, he thought hell was paved with the bald skulls of friers: I know nothing of that; yet of this sure I am, that none shall have their portion so low in the nethermost hell, none shall drink so deep of the cup of God's indignation, as they, who have refused Christ in the Gospel. Men will curse the day to all eternity, wherein the blessed name of Jesus Christ was made known unto them, if they continue to despise it. He that abuseth the choicest of mercies, shall have judgment without mercy. What can help them who reject the council of God for their good? If now *England* has received more culture from God, than other nations; there is more fruit expected of *England*, than other nations. A barren tree in the Lord's vineyard must be cut down, for cumbering the ground; the sheep of God must every one bear twins, and none be barren amongst them, Cant. iv. 2. If after all

God's care and husbandry his vineyard brings forth wild grapes, he will take away the hedge, break down the wall, and lay it waste. For the present the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of *England*, and if it be as earth, which when *the rain falls upon it, brings forth nothing but thorns and briers, it is nigh unto cursings, and the end thereof is to be burned*, Heb. vi. Men utterly and for ever neglect that ground, which they have tried their skill about, and laid out much cost upon it, if it bring not forth answerable fruits. Now here give me leave to say, and the Lord avert the evil deserved by it, that *England* (I mean these cities, and those other places, which since the beginning of our troubles, have enjoyed the Gospel, in a more free and plentiful manner than heretofore) hath shewed itself not much to value it.

(1.) In the time of straits, though the sound of the Gospel passed through all our streets, our villages enjoying them who preached peace, and brought glad tidings of good things, so that neither we, nor our fathers, nor our fathers fathers, ever saw the like before us; though manna fell round about our tents every day: yet as though all were lost, and we had nothing, manna was loathed as light bread, the presence of Christ made not recompence for the loss of our swine; men had rather be again in *Egypt*, than hazard a pilgrimage in the wilderness. If there be any here, that ever entertained thoughts to give up the worship of God to superstition, his Churches to tyranny, and the doctrine of the Gospel to episcopal corruptions, in the pressing of any troubles, let them now give God the glory, and be ashamed of their own hearts, lest it be bitterness in the end.

(2.) In the time of prosperity, by our fierce contentions about mint and cummin, whilst the weightier things of the Gospel have been undervalued, languishing about unprofitable questions, &c. but I shall not touch this wound lest it bleed.

Use 3. For exhortation, that every one of us, in whose hand there is any thing, would set in for the help of those parts of this island that as yet sit in darkness, yea, in the shadow of death, and have none to hold out the bread of life to their fainting souls. Doth not *Wales* cry, and the *North* cry, yea and the *West* cry, Come and help us? We are yet in a worse bondage, than any by your means we have been delivered from: if you leave us thus, all your protection will but yield us a more free and jovial passage to the chambers of death. Ah, little do the inhabitants of *Goshen* know, whilst they are contending about the bounds of their pasture, what darkness there is in other places of the land; how their poor starved souls would be glad of the crumbs that fall from our tables. O that God would stir up the hearts

(1.) Of ministers, to cast off all by-respects, and to flee to those places, where, in all probability, the harvest would be great, and the labourers are few or none at all. I have read of an heretick that swam over a great river in a frost to scatter his errors: the old Jewish, and now popish pharisees, compass sea and land to make profelytes: the merchants trade not into more countries, than the factors of *Rome* do, to gain souls to his holiness; *East* and *West*, far and wide, do these locusts spread themselves, not without hazard of their lives, as well as loss of their souls, to scatter their superstitions: only the preachers of the everlasting Gospel seem to have lost their zeal. O that there were the same mind in us that was in Jesus Christ, who counted it his meat and drink, to do his Father's will, in gaining souls!

(2.) Of the Magistrates, I mean of this Honourable Assembly, to turn themselves every lawful way, for the help of poor *Macedonians*. The truth is, in this I could speak more than I intend; for perhaps my zeal and some mens judgments would scarce make good harmony. This only I shall say, that if Jesus Christ might be preached, though with some defects in some circumstances, I should rejoice therein. O that you would labour to let all the parts of the kingdom taste of the sweetness of your successes, in carrying to them the Gospel of the Lord Jesus: that the doctrine of the Gospel might make way for the discipline of the Gospel, without which it will be a very skeleton. When manna fell in the wilderness from the hand of the Lord, every one had an equal share: I would there were not now too great an inequality in the scattering of manna, when secondarily in the hand of men; whereby some have all, and others none; some sheep daily picking the choice flowers of every pasture, others wandering upon the barren mountains, without guide or food. I make no doubt but the best ways for the furtherance of this are known full well unto you, and therefore have as little need to be petitioned in this, as other things. What then remains? but that for this, and all other necessary blessings, we all set our hearts and hands to petition the throne of grace.

A Country

A Country ESSAY for the PRACTICE of CHURCH- GOVERNMENT THERE.

READER,

THIS, be it what it will, thou hast no cause to thank or blame^a me for. Had I been mine own, it had not been thine. My submission unto others judgments being the only cause of submitting this unto thy censure. The substance of it is concerning things now doing, in some whereof I heretofore thought it my wisdom modestly hesitate (or at least not with the most peremptorily to dictate to others my apprehensions,) as wiser^b men have done in weightier things; and yet this not so much for want of persuasion in my own Mind, as out of opinion that we have already had too many needless and fruitless discourses about these matters. Would we could agree to spare perishing paper^c, and for my own part, had not the opportunity of a few lines in the close of this Sermon, and the importunity of not a few friends urged, I could have slighted all occasions, and accusations, provoking to publish those thoughts which I shall now impart. The truth is, in things concerning the Church (I mean things purely external, of form, order, and the like,) so many ways have I been spoken, that I often resolved to speak my self, desiring rather to appear (though conscious to my self of innumerable failings) what indeed I am, than what others incuriously suppose. But yet the many, I ever thought unworthy of an apology, and some of satisfaction; especially those, who would make their own judgments a rule for themselves and others, impatient that any should know, what they do not, or conceive otherwise than they, of what they do; in the mean time, placing almost all religion in that, which may be perhaps a hindrance of it; and being so valued, or rather overvalued, is certainly the greatest. Nay, would they would make their judgments, only so far as they are convinced, and are able to make out their conceptions to others, and not also their impotent desires, to be the rule; that so they might condemn only that, which complies not with their minds, and not all that also, which they find to thwart their aims and designs. But so it must be. Once more conformity is grown the touchstone (and that not in practice, but opinion) amongst the greatest part of men, however otherwise of different persuasions. Dissent is the only crime^d, and where that is all, that is culpable, it shall be made all that is so. From such as these, who almost hath not suffered? but towards such the best defence is silence. Besides, my judgment commands me, to make no known quarrel my own; but rather if it be possible, and as much as in me lieth, live peaceably with all men: *Ἰεθὺν πᾶσι* I proclaim to none, but men whose bowels are full of gall: in this spring of humours, lenitives for our own spirits may perhaps be as necessary, as purges for others brains. Farther, I desire to provoke^e none; more stings than combs are got at a nest of wasps: even cold stones, smitten to-

^a Laudatur ab his, culpatur ab illis.

^b See *August. Ep. 7. 28. 157. de orig. anim.*

^c Deferri in vicum vendentem thus & odores,
Et piper, & quicquid chartis amicitur ineptis.
Occidit miseros crambe repetita magistros.
Semper ego auditor tantum?

^d Immortale odium & nunquam sanabile bellum,
Ardet adhuc, Ombos & Tentyra, summas utrinque,
Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum,
Odit uterque locus. *Juven.*

Græce scire, aut polite loqui, apud illos hæresis est. *Eras. de Scholiast.*

^e Noli irritare crabrones. Si lapides teras nonne ignis erumpit? *Ambros. lib. 1. cap. 21. Prov. xxx. 33. Job xxxiii. 21. Prov. xxv. 18. Vid. Remed. contra gravam nationis Germanicæ. Luth. præfat. ad lib. de concil. Procest. 34. ministrorum. 4. Conclus. That generally all writers at the beginning of the Reformation.*

gether,

gether, sparkle out fire: the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood Neither do I conceive it wisdom, in these quarrellsome days, to entrust more of a man's self with others, than is very necessary. The heart of man is deceitful; some that have smooth tongues, have sharp teeth: such can give titles on the one side, and wounds on the other. Any of these considerations would easily have prevailed with me *stultitia hac caruisse*, had not mine ears been filled, presently after the preaching of the precedent sermon, with sad complaints of some, and false reports of others, neither of the lowest rank of men, as though I had helped to open a gate for that which is now called a Trojan horse; though heretofore counted an engine likelier to batter the walls of Babylon, than to betray the towers of Sion. This urged some to be urgent with me for a word or two about Church Government, according to the former suggestions, undermined, and a toleration of different persuasions, as they said asserted. Now truly to put the accusers to prove the crimination, for so it was, and held forth a grievous crime in their apprehensions, (what is really so God will judge) had been sufficient¹. But I could not so evade; and therefore, after my sermon was printed to the last sheet, I was forced to set apart a few hours², to give an account of what hath passed from me in both these things, which have been so variously reported; hoping that the reading may not be unuseful to some, as the writing was very necessary to me. And here at the entrance, I shall desire at the hands of men that shall cast an eye on this heap of good meaning, these few, as I suppose, equitable demands.

First, Not to prosecute men into odious appellations; and then themselves, who feigned the crime, pronounce the Sentence: like him, who said of one brought before him, If he be not guilty, it is fit he should be: involving themselves in a double guilt, of falsehood and malice; and the aspersed parties in a double misery, of being belied, in what they are, and hated for what they are not. If a man be not, what such men would have him, it is odds, but they will make him what he is not: if what he really is do not please, and that be not enough to render him odious, he shall sure enough be more. Ithacius will make all Priscillianists, who are any thing more devout than himself³. If men do but desire to see with their own eyes, presently they are enrolled of this, or that sect; every mispersuasion being beforehand in petitions, sermons, &c. rendred odious and intolerable: in such a course, innocency itself cannot go long free. Christians deal with one another in earnest, as children in their plays clap another's coat upon their fellow's shoulder, and pretending to beat that, cudgel him they have cloathed with it. What shall be given unto thee, oh thou false tongue? If we cannot be more charitable, let us be more ingenuous. Many a man hath been brought to a more favourable opinion of such as are called by dreadful names, than formerly, by the experience of false impositions on himself.

Secondly, Not to cloath our differences with expressions, fitting them no better than Saul's armour did David: nor make them like a little man in a bumbast coat upon stilts, walking about like a giant. Our little differences may be met at every stall, and in too many pulpits, swelled by unbecomming expressions, into such a formidable bulk, as poor creatures are even startled at their horrid looks and appearance: whilst our own persuasions are set out *ἐν μαλακοῖς ῥησιν* with silken words, and gorgeous apparel, as if we sent them into the world a wooing. Hence, whatever it is, it must be temple building; God's government; Christ's scepter, throne, kingdom; the only way, that, for want of which, errors, heresies, sins, spring among us, plagues, judgments, punishments come upon us. To such things as these all pretend, who are very confident they have found out the only way. Such big words as these have made us believe, that we are mortal adversaries (I speak of the parties at variance about government) that one kingdom, communion, heaven cannot hold us. Now truly if this course be followed so to heighten our differences, by adorning the truth we own with such titles as it doth not merit; and branding the errors we oppose with such marks, as in cold blood we cannot think they themselves, but only in their (by us supposed) tendance do deserve; I doubt not, but that it will be bitterness unto us all

¹ Si accusasse sufficiet, quis erit innocens?

² Nec nos obniti contra, nec tendere tantum Sufficimus.

³ Sulp. Sever. Epist. Hist. Eccles.

⁴ Plut. Apophtheg.

in the end. And, quære, whether by this means, many have not been brought to conceive the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which himself affirms to be within us, to consist in forms, outward order, positive rules, and external government. I design none, but earnestly desire, that the two great parties, at this day litigant in this kingdom, would seriously consider, what is like to be the issue of such proceedings; and whether the mystery of godliness, in the power thereof, be like to be propagated by it. Let not truth be weighed in the balance of our interest. Will not a dram of that turn the scale with some against many arguments? Power is powerful to persuade.

Thirdly, Not to measure mens judgments by their subscribing, or refusing to subscribe petitions in these days about Church Government. For subscribers, would every one could not see, with what a zealous nescience, and implicit judgment many are led. And for refusers, though perhaps they could close with the general words, wherewith usually they are expressed; yet there are so many known circumstances, restraining those words to particular significations, directing them to by, and secondary tendencies, as must needs make some abstain. For mine own part, from subscribing late petitions about Church Government, I have been withheld by such reasons as these.

1. I dare not absolutely assert, maintain, and abide by it (as rational men ought to do every clause, in any thing owned by their subscription) that the cause of all the evils, usually annumerated in such petitions, is the want of Church Government, taking it for any government that ever yet was established amongst men, or in notion otherwise made known unto me. Yea, I am confident that more probable causes in this juncture of time might be assigned of them. Neither can any be ignorant, how plentifully such evils abounded, when Church discipline was most severely executed. And lastly, I am confident that whoever lives to see them suppressed by any outward means (when spiritual weapons shall be judged insufficient) will find it to be, not any thing, either included in, or necessarily annexed unto Church discipline, that must do it; but some other thing, not unlike that, which in days of yore, when all the world wandered after the beast, suppressed all truth and error, but only what the arch enemy of Jesus Christ was pleased to hold out to be believed. But of this afterwards.

2. I dare not affirm that the parliament hath not established a government already, for the essentials of it, themselves affirming that they have¹, and their ordinances about rulers, rules, and persons to be ruled (the requisita and materials of government) being long since extant. Now to require a thing to be done by them, who affirm that they have already done it, argues either much weakness, or supine negligence in ourselves, not to understand what is effected; or a strong imputation on those that have done it, either fraudulently to pretend that which is false, or foolishly to averse what they do not understand. Yet though I have learned to obey, as far as lawfully I may, my judgment is exceedingly far from being enslaved, and according to that, by God's assistance, shall be my practice; which if it run cross to the prescriptions of authority, it shall chearfully submit to the censure thereof. In the mean time, all petitioning of any party about this business, seems to thwart some declarations of the house of commons, whereunto I doubt not but they intend for the main inviolably and unalterably to adhere. Add hereunto, that petitioning in this kind was not long since voted breach in privilege, in them who might justly expect as much favour and liberty in petitioning, as any of their brethren in the kingdom; and I have more than one reason to suppose, that the purpose and design of theirs and others, was one and the same.

3. There are no small grounds of supposal, that some petitions have not their rise from amongst them by whom they are subscribed; but that the spring and master wheels giving the first motion to them, are distant and unseen: myself having been lately urged to subscription upon this ground, that directions were had for it from above (as we use to speak in the country) yea, in this I could say more than I intend, aiming at nothing but the quieting of mens spirits, needlessly exasperated; only I can-

¹ Vid. catal. hæret. apud Tertul. de præscript. Epiphani. Aug. Vincent.

² Ego ancillæ tuæ fidem habui: nonne tu impudens, qui nec mihi ipsi credis? Phil. apud Plut. apophth.

not but say, that honest men ought to be very cautious how they put themselves upon any engagement, that might make any party or faction in the kingdom; suppose that their interest in the least measure doth run cross to that of the great council thereof, thereby to strengthen the hands or designs of any, by occasioning an opinion that upon fresh or new divisions (which God of his mercy prevent) we would not adhere constantly to our old principles, walking according to which we have hitherto found protection and safety. And I cannot but be jealous for the honour of our noble parliament, whose authority is every day undermined, and their regard in the affections of the people shaken, by such dangerous insinuations, as though they could in an hour put an end to all our disturbances, but refuse it. This season also for such petitions seems to be very unseasonable, the greatest appearing danger impendent to this kingdom being from the contest about Church Government, which by such means as this is exceedingly heightened, and animosity added to the parties at variance.

4. A particular form of Church discipline is usually in such petitions, either directly expressed, or evidently pointed at, and directed unto, as that alone which our covenant engageth us to embrace. Yea, as though it had long since designed that particular way, and distinguished it from all others, the embracing of it is pressed under the pain of breach of covenant, a crime abhorred of God and man. Now truly to suppose that our covenant did tie us up absolutely to any one formerly known way of Church discipline, the words formally engaging us into a disquisition out of the word, of that which is agreeable to the mind and will of God, is to me such a childish, ridiculous, selfish conceit, as I believe no knowing men will once entertain, unless prejudice begotten by their peculiar interest hath disturbed their intellectuals. For my part, I know no Church Government in the world already established amongst any sort of men, of the truth and necessity whereof, I am convinced in all particulars; especially if I may take their practice to be the best interpreter of their maxims.

Fourthly, Another postulatium is, that men would not use an over zealous speed, upon every small difference, to characterize men (otherwise godly and peaceable) as sectaries, knowing the odiousness of the name^m, among the vulgar, deservedly, or otherwise imposed, and the evil of the thing itself, rightly apprehended, whereunto lighter differences do not amount. Such names as this I know are arbitrary, and generally serve the wills of the greater number. They are commonly sectaries, who, jure aut injuria, are oppressed. Nothing was ever persecuted under an esteemed name. Names are in the power of many, things and their causes are known to few. There is none in the world can give an ill title to others, which from some he doth not receive: the same right which in this kind I have towards another, he hath towards me; unless I affirm myself to be infallible, not so he. Those names which men are known by, when they are oppressed, they commonly use against others, whom they seek to oppress. I would therefore that all horrid appellations, as Increase of strife, Kindlers of wrath, Enemies of charity, Food for animosity, were for ever banished from amongst us. Let a spade be called a spade, so we take heed Christ be not called Beelzebub. I know my profession to the greatest part of the world is sectarism, as Christianity: amongst those who profess the name of Christ, to the greatest number I am a sectary, because a protestantⁿ: amongst protestants, at least the one half account all men of my persuasion, calvinistical, sacramentarian sectaries: amongst these again, to some I have been a puritanical sectary, an Acrian heretick, because anti-prelatical: yea, and amongst these last, not a few account me a sectary, because I plead for presbyterial government in Churches: and to all these am I thus esteemed, as I am fully convinced, causelessly, and erroneously. What they call sectarism, I am persuaded is ipsissima veritas, the very truth itself, to which they also ought to submit; that others also, tho' upon false grounds, are convinced of the truth of their own persuasion, I cannot but believe: and therefore as I find by experience, that the horrid names of Heretick, Schismatick, Sectary, and the like, have never had any influence or force upon my judgment, nor otherwise moved me, unless it were unto re-

^m Nunc vero si nominis odium est, quis nominum reatus? quæ accusatio vocabulorum? nisi aut Barbarum sonat aliqua vox nominis, aut maledicum, aut impudicum? Tertul. Apol.

ⁿ Act. xxiv. 14. and xxviii. 22. Hæresis christianorum, Tertul. Scilicet Christi. Id. Hæresis catholica, & hæresis sanctissima, Constant. Epist. Chr. Syrac. missenta systema: quo probare conatur Calvinianos esse hæreticos. Hum. Calv. Tur. Andrews Epist. ad Molin.

taliation; so I am persuaded it is also with others, for homines sumus, forcing them abroad in such liveries, doth not at all convince them, that they are servants to the master of sects indeed, but only makes them wait an opportunity to cast the like mantle on their traducers. And this usually is the beginning of arming the more against the few with violence, impatient of bearing the burdens, which they impose on others shoulders; by means whereof Christendom hath been made a theatre of blood, and one amongst all, after that by cruelty and villany he had prevailed above the rest, took upon him to be the only dictator in Christian Religion. But of this afterwards.

Now by the concession of these, as I hope, not unequitable demands, thus much at least I conceive will be attained, viz. That a peaceable dissent in some smaller things, disputable questions, not absolutely necessary assertions, deserves not any rigid censure, distance of affections, or breach of Christian communion and amity. In such things as these, veniam petimusque damusque vicissim: if otherwise, I profess I can hardly bring my mind to comply and close in with them, amongst whom almost any thing is lawful but to dissent.

These things being premised, I shall now set down, and make publick that proposal, which heretofore I have tendred, as a means to give some light into a way for the profitable and comfortable practice of Church Government; drawing out of general notions what is practically applicable, so circumstantiated, as of necessity it must be. And herein I shall not alter any thing, or in the least expression go off from that which long since I drew up at the request of a worthy friend, after a discourse about it: and this, not only because it hath already been in the hands of many, but also because my intent is not, either to assert, dispute, or make out any thing farther of my judgment in these things, than I have already done, (hoping for more leisure so to do, than the few hours assigned to the product of this short appendix will permit) but only by way of a defensative, to evince, that the rumours which have been spread by some, and entertained by others, too greedily about this matter, have been exceeding causeless and groundless: so that though my second thoughts have, if I mistake not, much improved some particulars in this Essay, yet I cannot be induced, because of the reason before recounted (the only cause of the publication thereof) to make any alteration in it; only I shall present the reader with some few things, which gave occasion and rise to this proposal. As

(1.) A fervent desire to prevent all farther division and separation, disunion of minds amongst godly men, suspicions and jealousies in the people towards their ministers, as aiming at power and unjust domination over them, fruitless disputes, languishings about unprofitable questions, breaches of charity for trifles, exasperating the minds of men one against another: all which growing evils, tending to the subversion of Christian love, and the power of godliness, with the disturbance of the state, are too much fomented by that sad breach and division, which is here attempted to be made up.

(2.) A desire to work and draw the minds of all my brethren (the most I hope need it not) to set in for a thorough reformation, and for the obtaining of holy communion, to keep off indifferently the unworthy from Church privileges, and profaning of holy things. Whereunto, I presumed, the discovery of a way, whereby this might be effected, without their disturbance in their former station, would be a considerable motive.

(3.) A consideration of the paucity of positive rules in the Scripture for Church Government with the great difficulty of reducing them to practice in these present times (both sufficiently evidenced by the endless disputes, and irreconcilable differences of godly, precious, and learned men about them) made me conceive, that the practice of the apostolical Churches, doubtless for a time observed in those immediately succeeding, would be the best external help for the right interpretation of those rules we have, and pattern to draw out a Church way by. Now truly after my best search and enquiry into the first Churches and their constitution, framing an idea and exemplar of them, this poor heap following seems to me as like one of them, as any thing that yet I have seen; nothing at all doubting, but that if a more skilful hand had the limning of it, the proportions, features and lines, would be very exact,

equal and parallel: yea, did not extreme haste now call it from me, so that I have no leisure, so much as to transcribe the first draught, I doubt not but by God's assistance, it might be so set forth, as not to be thought altogether undesirable, if men would but a little lay aside beloved preconceptions. But the Printer stays for every line: only I must entreat every one that shall cast a candid eye on this unwillingly exposed embryo, and rude abortion, that he would assume in his mind any particular Church mentioned in the Scripture, as of Hierusalem, Corinth, Ephesus, or the like, consider the way and state they were then, and some ages after, in respect of outward immunities and enjoyments; and tell me, whether any rational man can suppose, that either there were in those places sundry particular Churches, with their distinct, peculiar officers, acting in most pastoral duties severally in them, as distinguished and divided into entire societies, but ruling them in respect of some particulars jointly in combination, considered as distinct bodies; or else, that they were such single congregations, as that all that power and authority which was in them, may seem fitly and conveniently to be entrusted with a small handful of men, combined under one single pastor, with one, two, or perhaps no associated elders. More than this I shall only ask, whether all ordinary power may not without danger, be asserted to reside in such a Church as is here described, reserving all due right and authority to councils and magistrates? Now for the fountain, seat, and rise of this power, for the just distribution of it, between pastors and people, this is no place to dispute; these following lines were intended merely to sedate and bury such contests, and to be what they are entitled.

OUR long expectation of some accommodation^p between the dissenting parties about Church Government, being now almost totally frustrate; being also persuaded, partly through the apparent fruitfulness of all such undertakings, partly by other reasons, not at this time seasonable to be expressed, that all national disputes tending that way, will prove birthless tympanies; we deem it no ungrateful endeavour, waving all speculative ideas, to give an *Essay* in such expressions, as all our country friends, concerned in it, may easily apprehend, of what we conceive amongst us may really be reduced to comfortable and useful practice: concealing for a while all arguments for, motives and inducements unto this way, with all those rocks and shelves, appearing very hideous in former proposals, which we strive to avoid; until we perceive whether any of our giants in this controversy will not come, and look, and so overcome it, that at first dash the whole frame be irrecoverably ruined.

Neither would we have any expect our full sense to each particular imaginable in this business; it being only a heap of materials, most what unhewed, that we intend, and not a well compacted fabrick; and if the main be not condemned, we are confident no difference will ensue about particulars, which must have their latitude. However, if it be received as candidly as it is offered, no inconvenience will ensue. Now that the whole may be the better apprehended, and the reasons, if not the necessity of this undertaking intimated, we shall premise some things concerning the place, and persons, for whose use is this proposal.

First, For ministers. The place having all this while, through the goodness of God, been preserved in peace and quietness, and by reason of the rich supply of able men sent hither by the parliament, there are in many parishes, godly, orthodox, peace-loving pastors.

Secondly, For the people.

1. Very many, as in most other places, extremely ignorant, worldly, profane, scandalously vicious.
2. Scarcely any parish wherein there are not some visibly appearing, of all ages, sexes, and conditions, fearing God, and walking unblameably with a right foot, as besecmeth the Gospel: though in some places, they are but like the berries after the shaking of an olive-tree.
3. Amongst these very few gifted, fitted, or qualified for government.

^p The form being given to this Essay at the first, I thought not good to alter any thing about it.

4. Many knowing professors, and such of a long standing, inclined to separation, unless some expedient may be found for comfortable communions; and in this resolution seem to be settled to a contempt of allurements, and threatnings.

5. Seducers every where lying in wait to catch and deceive well meaning souls, any thing discontented with the present administration of Church affairs.

6. Upon all which it appears, that comfortable communion is not to be attained, within the bounds of respective parishes.

Farther to carry on our intentions, we would desire of authority,

1. That our divisions may not be allotted out by our committees, who, without other consideration, have bounded us with the precincts of high constables; but be left to the prudence of ministers, and other Christians, willingly associating themselves in the work.

2. That men placed in civil authority may not, by virtue of their authority, claim any privilege in things purely ecclesiastical.

In the several parishes let things be thus ordered.

1. Let every minister continue in his station, taking especial care of all them that live within the precincts of his parish; preaching, exhorting, rebuking, publickly, and from house to house, warning all, using all appointed means to draw them to Jesus Christ, and the faith of the Gospel, waiting with all patience on them that oppose themselves, until God give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and in so doing, rest upon the calling he hath already received.

2. Let the respective elders of the several parishes, to be chosen according to the ordinance of parliament (annually, or otherwise) join with the ministers, in all acts of rule and admonition, with those other parts of their charge, which the parochial administration doth require.

3. Let all criminal things, tending to the disturbance of that Church administration which is amongst them, be by the officers orderly delated to such as the civil magistrate shall appoint, to take cognizance and determine of such things.

And thus far have we proposed nothing new, nothing not common; neither in that which follows is there any thing so indeed, may it but be rightly apprehended.

For the several combinations of ministers and people.

1. Let the extremes of the division not be above eight or ten miles distant, and so the middle or center not more than four or five miles from any part of it, which is no more than some usually go to the preaching of the word, and in which space Christians are generally as well known one to another in the country, as almost at the next door in cities; but yet this may be regulated according to the number of professors, fit for the society intended, which would not be above five hundred, nor under one hundred.

2. In this division let there be, in the name of Christ, and the fear of God, a gathering of professors (visible saints, men and women of good knowledge, and upright conversation, so holding forth their communion with Christ) by their own desire, and voluntary consent, into one body, uniting themselves, by virtue of some promissory engagement, or otherwise, to perform all mutual duties, to walk in love and peace, spiritual and Church communion, as becometh the Gospel.

3. Let every one so assembling have liberty, at some of the first meetings, to except against another, whether minister or others, so it be done with a spirit of meekness, and submission of judgment; or to demand such questions, for satisfaction, as shall be thought fit to be propounded.

4. When some convenient number are thus assembled, let the ministers, if men of approved integrity and abilities, be acknowledged as elders respectively, called to teach and rule in the Church, by virtue of their former mission, and be assumed to be so, to this society, by virtue of their voluntary consent and election.

5. Let the ministers engage themselves in a special manner to watch over this flock, every one according to his abilities, both in teaching, exhorting, and ruling, so often as occasion shall be administered, for things that concern ecclesiastical rule and Church order; acting jointly, and as in a classical combination, and putting forth all authority, that such classes are entrusted with.

6. If it be judged necessary that any officers be added to them for the purpose before named, let them be chosen by the consent of the multitude.

7. If not, let the ministers have the whole distributed among themselves, respectively, according to the difference of their gifts; reserving to the people their due and just privileges.

8. Let this congregation assemble at the least once in a month, for the celebration of the communion, and other things, them concerning; the meetings of the ministers may be as appointed by authority, for those of a classis.

9. If any one after his admission be found to walk unworthily, let him after solemn repeated admonition be by joint consent left to his former station.

10. Let any person, in any of the parishes combined as before, that is desirous to be admitted into this society, as is thought fit, be received at any time.

11. If the number in process of time appear to be too great, let it be divided, and subdivided, according to conveniency.

12. Any one of the ministers may administer the sacrament, either to some, or all of these, in their several parishes, or at the common meeting, as opportunity shall serve.

13. Let the rules of admission into this society and fellowship be scriptural, and the things required in the members only such, as all godly then affirm to be necessary for every one that will partake of the ordinances with profit and comfort, special care being taken that none be excluded, who have the least breathings of soul in sincerity after Jesus Christ.

Now beyond these generals for the present we judge it needless to express ourselves, or otherwise to confirm what we have proposed, each assertion almost directly pointing out unto what, in that particular, we do adhere, which being sufficiently confirmed by others, were but superfluous labour to undertake: neither shall we trouble you with a catalogue of conveniences, whereof men are put upon an express annumeration, when otherwise they do not appear, but commit the consideration of the tendence of the whole to every one's judgment: and conclude with the removal of a few obvious objections, being resolved hereafter, by God's assistance, to endeavour satisfaction about this way unto all; unless to such as shall be so simple, or malicious, as to ask, whether this way be that of the *Presbyterians* or *Independents*.

Obj. 1. By this means parishes will be unchurched.

Ans. 1. If by Churches you understand such entire societies of Christians, as have all Church power, both according to right and exercise, in, and among themselves, as *Independents* speak of congregations, then they were never churched by any.

2. If only civil divisions of men, that may conveniently be taught by one pastor, and ruled by elders, whereof some may be fit to partake of all the ordinances, some not, as *Presbyterians* esteem them, then by this way they receive no injury, nor are abridged of any of their privileges.

Obj. 2. This is to erect Churches amongst Churches, and against Churches.

Ans. No such thing, but a mere forming of one Church, with one presbytery.

Obj. 3. It is against the parliaments ordinance to assume a power of admitting and excluding of Church members, not exactly according to their rule, nor subordinate to the supervising of such as are appointed by them.

Ans. 1. For the rules set out by ordinance, we conceive that the Church officers are to be interpreters of them, until appeal be made from them, unto which we shall submit; and if it be so determined against us, that any be put upon our communion, *ipsi viderint*, we shall labour to deliver our own souls.

2. Though the parliament forbid any but such authoritatively to be excluded, yet it doth not command that any be admitted but such as desire it; and we shall pray for such a blessing upon the work of our ministry, as will either prepare a man for it, or persuade them *pro tempore* from it; unless they be stubbornly obstinate, or openly wicked, against whom we hope for assistance: unto objections arising from trouble and inconvenience, we answer, it cost more to redeem their souls.

The God of peace and unity give the increase.

—*Si quid novisti rectius istis,*

Candidus imperti, si non, his utere.

And

And this is all which for this present I shall assert in this business, and this also in my own vindication: time and leisure may give me advantage hereafter (if God permit) to deal seriously in this cause; in the mean time, it is not unknown to many, that so much as this was necessary for me to do, and I will not add now any thing that is not necessary.

Now for the other head of the accusation about toleration of errors, *Philosophare volo, sed paucis*, something I shall add of my own present judgment in this matter, but with willing, express submission unto those, whom the use and experience of things, with knowledge of foreign parts, skill in the rule of commonwealths, acquaintedness with the affections and spirits of men, have enabled to look practically into the issues and tendencies of such a toleration. The main prejudice against it arising from the disturbances which it naturally (they say) produceth in civil states: I conceive no sort of men more unfit to judge of this, than those, whose abilities of learning do properly put them upon the discussing of this, and other controversies, as far as they are purely ecclesiastical; no men more frequently betraying narrowness of apprehension, and weakness in secular affairs. For other consequences, I shall not be much moved with them, until it be clearly determined, whether be worse, hereticks, or hypocrites; to maintain an error, or counterfeit the truth; and whether profession upon compulsion be acceptable to God, or man: laying those aside, let the thing itself be a little considered.

Peace ecclesiastical, quiet among the Churches (which without doubt would be shaken by an universal toleration) is that which most men aim at, and desire. And truly he that doth not, scarcely deserves the name and privilege of a Christian; unity in the Scripture is so pressed, so commanded, and commended, that not to breath after it argues a heart acted by another spirit than that which moved the holy penmen thereof. But yet every agreement and consent amongst men, professing the name of Christ, is not the unity and peace commended in the Scripture: that which some think to be Christ's order, may perhaps be antichristian confusion: the specious name of unity may be a cloak for tyranny. Learned men have reckoned up a seven-fold unity: in the papacy, all which notwithstanding are far enough from that true, evangelical unity, which we are bound to labour for. Again, that which is good, must be sought in a right manner, or it will not be so to us: peace and quiet is desirable; but there must be good causes, and very urgent, to make us build our habitations out of others rains, and roll our pillows in their blood: I speak of things ecclesiastical. The historian¹ makes it a part of the oration spoken by *Gaius* the chieftain of the *British* forces, to stir them up against the *Roman* insolency, that when they had finished their depopulations, then they said they had peace: the same men have set up bishopricks in the *Indies*, as their forefathers did colonies here and elsewhere, with fire and sword. I know not how it comes to pass, but so it is, this proceeding with violence in matters of religion hath pleased and displeased all sorts of men, however distinguished by a true or false persuasion, who have enjoyed a vicissitude of the supreme power in any place, in supporting or suppressing of them: *ure, feca, occide*, is the language of men backed with authority: *quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*, say the same men under oppression: to give particular instances, were to lay open that nakedness, which I suppose it my duty rather to cover. What then, you will say, shall every one be suffered to do what he pleaseth? You mean, think, or believe what he pleaseth, or that which he is convinced to be a truth. Must all sorts of men and their opinions be tolerated? These questions are not in one word to be resolved: many supposals are to be confirmed, many notions distinguished and restrained, before a positive answer can be given: take them in their whole latitude, and they may serve all mens turns. A negative universal resolution may tantamount unto: The many intrusted with authority, or having that to back them, ought not to tolerate any of different persuasions from them, if they suppose them erroneous. Now truly for my part, were I in *Spain*

¹ *Hosia ab animo libenti accipiuntur*, Tertul.

² 1. Satanica. 2. Ethnica. 3. Belluina. 4. Iscariotica. 5. Tyrannica. 6. Herodiana. 7. Ventris causa, *Altrici*, de variis sectis ap. papistas.

³ *Solitudinem ubi faciunt, pacem appellant*. Tacitus vita Agr. cap. 10.

⁴ *Humani juris, & naturalis potestatis est, unicuique quod putaverit colere*, Tertul. *Quis imponet mihi necessitatem alii credendi quod nolum, aut quod velim non credendi*, Lactan.

or *Italy*, a native of those places, and God should be pleased there to reveal that truth of his Gospel unto me, which he hath done in *England*, I believe those states ought to tolerate me, though they were persuaded that I were the most odious heretick under heaven; and what punishment soever they should impose on me for my profession, would be required at their hands, unless any can convince me, that God allows men to slay his servants for professing the Gospel, if they believe them to be hereticks: and so also excuse the *Jews* in crucifying his dear Son, because they esteemed him as an impostor. Christ was once crucified amongst thieves: he may be again, in them that are so supposed. I shall therefore summarily set down what I conceive in answer to these questions, premising a few things, if I mistake not, universally granted.

And yet a word or two concerning toleration itself, that some guests may be given at what we aim and intend, must interpose. Much discourse about toleration hath been of late days amongst men, some pleading for it, more against it, as it always must be. Toleration is the alms of authority, yet men that beg for it, think so much at least their due: some say it is a sin to grant it, others that it is no less to deny it: generally the pleaders of each side have their interest in the cause. I never knew one contend earnestly for a toleration of dissenters, but was so himself; nor any for their suppression, but were themselves of the persuasion which prevaileth: for if otherwise, this later would argue a circumcellion fury, wilfully to seek their own ruin; the former so much charity, and commiseration of the condition of mortality, as in these days would procure of the most no other livery but a fools-coat. Who almost would not admire at such new discovered antipodes, as should offer to assert an equal regiment for *Trojans* and *Tyrians**, a like regard and allowance from authority for other sects, as for that whereof themselves are a share? Now amongst these contesters, few (nay not any) have I found, neither on the one side, or the other, clearly and distinctly to define what they mean by toleration, or what is the direct purpose, signification and tendency of non-toleration (a word in its whole extent written only in the forehead of the man of sin) what bounds, what terriers are to be assigned to the one, or to the other; unto what degrees of longitude^v, or latitude their pole is to be elevated. Some perhaps by a toleration understood an universal, uncontroled license *vivendi ut velis*, in things concerning religion; that every one may be let alone, and not so much as discountenanced, in doing, speaking, acting, how, what, where, or when he pleaseth, *in agendis & credendis fidei*, in all such things as concern the worship of God, articles of belief, or generally any thing commanded in religion; and in the mean time the parties at variance, and litigant about differences, freely to revile, reject, and despise one another, according as their provoked genius shall dispose their minds thereunto. Now truly though every one of this mind pretends to cry for mercy to be extended unto poor afflicted truth, yet I cannot but be persuaded that such a toleration would prove exceeding pernicious to all sorts of men, and at last end in a dispute, like that recounted by *Juvenal*, between two cities in *Egypt*, about their differences between their garden and river deities²; or like the contest related by *Vertomannus* in his travels, amongst the *Mahometans*, about *Haly* and *Homar*, the pretended successors to their grand impostor, where every one plied his adversary, *Hastisque clypeisque & saxis grandibus*, cleaving their skulls, and making entrance for their arguments by dint of sword: and I with experience did not sufficiently convince us, that the profession of Christianity, where the power of godliness is away, will not prevent these evils: *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*.

Others there are that press for a non-toleration of any thing that opposes or contradicts the truth in any part, themselves being in their own judgments fully possessed of all, their tenets being unto them the only form of wholesome words: moreover (for these things recounted make not the difference, for it is so with all sects of men) the magistrates, or those who are intrusted with all that power over men, which for the preservation of humane society, God hath been pleased to make out

* *Tros, Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur.*

^v *Late sibi summoveat omnes.*

— *It in vacua regnet Basiliscus arena.*

² *Sacris gentes quibus hec nascantur in hortis Numina.*

from himself, are also of the same persuasion with them: these they supplicate that an effectual course may be taken (asserting not only that they are entrusted with power from above so to do, but also that it is their great sin if they do it not) whereby all sectaries and erroneous persons may not only not be countenanced, or kept within bounds, and not be forborn in any disturbing, insolent miscarriage; but also that all that doctrine which is not publickly owned, may be sure to be supplanted, by the restraint and punishment of the dissenters, whether unto imprisonment, confiscation of goods, or death itself; for they must not cease, nay (if the thing is to be effected) they cannot rationally assign where to stay in punishing, before they come to the period of all, death itself, which is the point and center wherein all the lines of this sentence meet: wherein, to me truly there is nothing but *luctus ubique, pavor, & plurima mortis imago*. I know it is coloured with fair pretences²; but *quid ego verba audiam, facta cum video?* It is written with red letters, and the pens of its abettors are dipt in the blood of Christians. Doubtless between these extremes lies the way.

Again, some by a toleration understand a mutual forbearance in communion, tho' there be great differences in opinion; and this the generality of the Clergy (as heretofore they were called) did usually incline unto, viz. that any men almost might be tolerated, whilst they did not separate. And these lay down this for a ground, that there is a latitude in judgment to be allowed; so that communion may be held by men of several persuasions, in all things, with an allowance of withdrawing in those particulars, wherein there is dissent amongst them: and this the *Belgick* remonstrants pressed hard for, before they were cast out by the synod of *Dort*.

Others plead for a toleration out of communion, that is, that men renouncing the communion of those, whose religion is owned and established by authority, may yet peaceably be suffered to enjoy the ordinances in separation.

Moreover, by communion some understand one thing, some another. Some think that it is preserved sufficiently, if the dissenters do acknowledge those from whom they do dissent to be true Churches, to enjoy the ordinances of Christ, to have the means of life and salvation in them, closing with them in all substantials of doctrine; but yet because of some disorders in, and amongst them, they dare not be as of them, but yet only separate from those disorders.

Others again think that communion is utterly dissolved, if any distinctions of persons be made, more than all acknowledge ought to be, any differences in the administration of the ordinances, any divisions in government at all.

Now all these things, and many more that might be added, must clearly be distinguished and determined by him that would handle his matter at large and exactly, that we may know what he means by those ambiguous words, and in what acceptance he owns them. Until this be done, a man may profess to oppose both toleration and non-toleration, without any contradiction at all, because in their several senses they do not always intend the same.

For my part, as on the one side if by toleration you mean *potestatem vivendi ut velis* (as the Stoicks defined liberty) an universal concession of an unbounded liberty³, or rather bold, unbridled licentiousness, for every one to vent what he pleaseth, and to take what course seems good in his own eyes, in things concerning religion and the worship of God, I cannot give my vote for it. So if by non-toleration you mean that which the gloss upon that place, *Hereticum hominem de vita*, intended by adding, *supple: tolle*^b, to make up the sense; as if they were not to be endured in any place, who dissent only in not-fundamentals, from that which is established, but to be hated, *ad furcas & leones*, as the Christians of old, or to have their new derided lights extinguished in that light, *Qua stantes ardent, qui fixo gutture fumant*, in a *Nero's* bonfire: into the secrets of them that are thus minded, let not my soul descend. *In their anger they will slay a man, and in their self-will they dig down a wall; cursed be their anger for it is fierce, and their wrath for it is cruel*. These things then being so ambiguous, doubtful, and uncertain, we dare not be too pe-

¹ *Inventus, Chrysippus, qui finitior accipit.*

² *Εχθροὶ γὰρ μοι καὶ ὁ ἅμα αἰδῶ πέλαστον,
ὅς ἂν ἔτιοντο μὴ κινῶν τὰ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ βάζει.*

³ *Ελευθρία αὐτοπραγίας.* Cicero. *Parad.*

^b *Tolle de vita.*

remptorily dogmatical, nor positively assert but only what is certainly true: as are these following.

1. That heresies and errors ought not to be tolerated; that is, men ought not to connive at, or comply with those ways and opinions, which they are convinced to be false, erroneous, contrary to sound doctrine, and that *form of wholesome words* which is delivered to us, as (next unto Christ) the greatest treasure of our souls, especially if credibly supposed to shake any fundamentals of the common faith; but with all their strength and abilities, in all lawful ways, upon every just call, to oppose, suppress, and overthrow them, to root them up, and cast them out, that they may not as noxious weeds and tares overgrow and choke the good corn, amongst which they are covertly scattered. All predictions of *false christs, false prophets, false teachers to come*, and to be avoided, all cautions to *try spirits, avoid hereticks, beware of seducers, keep close to the truth received, to hate the doctrine of Nicolaitans, to avoid endless disputes, strife of words, old fables, languishing about unprofitable questions*; the epithets given to, and descriptions made of heresies, that they are *pernicious, damnable, cankers, works of the flesh*, and the like; are all incitations and encouragements for the applying of all expedient means, for the taking out of the way these stumbling blocks. Let then the Scriptures be searched, and all ways embraced which the Gospel holdeth forth, for the *discovering, convincing, silencing, reproving, confuting of errors*, and persons erring, by *admonitions, reproofs, mighty Scripture convictions*, evidencing of the truth, with fervent prayers to Almighty God, the God of truth, that he would give us one heart, and one way; and if these weapons of our warfare do not prevail, we must let them know, that one day their disobedience will be revenged with being cut off, and *cast out, as unprofitable branches, fit to be cast into the fire*.

2. That any doctrine tending undeniably in its own nature (and not by strained consequences) to the disturbance of the civil state may be suppressed, by all such means as are lawfully to be used, for the conservation of the peace and safety of the State. Jesus Christ, though accused of sedition, taught none, practised none, his Gospel gives not controul to magistracy, righteous laws, or any sort of lawful government established amongst men; and therefore they whose faith is faction, and whose religion is rebellion, I mean *Jesuits*, and jesuitical Papists, some of the articles of whose creeds are directly repugnant to the safety, yea, being of any commonwealths, wherein themselves, and men of their own persuasion, do not domineer and rule, may be proceeded against by them who bear not the sword in vain. The like may be said of men seditious under any pretences whatsoever, like the *Anabaptists at Munster*.

3. That such heresies, or mispersuasions, as are attended with any notorious sin in practice (I mean, not in our consequences, but owned by their abettors, and practised accordingly, beyond *Epicurus*, whose honest life was not corrupted by his foul dishonest opinion) like the *Nicolaitans*, teaching, as most suppose, promiscuous lust; and the Papists express abominable idolatry, may be in their authors more severely punished, than such crimes not owned and maintained do singly deserve. To pretend conscience in such a case will not avail; *the works of the flesh are manifest*, easily to be discerned, known to all. Apologies for such argue fearedness, not tenderness: such *evil communication as corrupteth good manners*, is not to be tolerated.

4. No pretences whatsoever, nor seeming colour, should countenance men, dissenting from what is established, to revile, traduce, deride, or otherwise expose to vulgar contempt, by words, or actions, the way owned by authority, (if not evidently fallen off from *Jehovah* to *Baal*) or fasten bitter uncharitable appellations on those, who act according to that way; that is, the publick ministers, and ministry, acknowledged, owned, and maintained by the supreme magistrate, where they both are. Where by the way, I cannot but complain of want of ingenuity and candid charity in those men, who having a comfortable maintenance arising another way, do yet, *ad faciendum populum*, continually in pulpits, and other publick places, inveigh against that way of maintenance, which is allowed by the magistrate, and set apart for those that labour in the word and doctrine; unto whom I wish no farther evil, but only forced patience, when their neighbouring tradesman shall have persuaded the people about him, that preachers of the Gospel ought to live by the work of their hands, and so the contribution for their maintenance be subducted.

Such men as these do shew of what spirit they are, and what they would do if they were lions; seeing they bark so much, being but snarling dogs. And therefore truly, if some severe course were used for the restraint of those, who in our days strive to get themselves a name, and to build up their repute, by slighting, undervaluing, and by all uncharitable malicious ways, rendring odious those from whom they dissent, I should not much intercede for them: these are evil works, fruits of the flesh, evident to all. Now these, and such things as these, are acknowledged by all even spirited men. Some few I shall now add, I hope not unlike them. As

5. That it is a most difficult undertaking to judge of heresies and hereticks, no easy thing to shew what heresy is in general; whether this, or that particular error be an heresy or no, whether it be an heresy in this or that man; especially if such things as stubbornness, and pertinacy upon conviction, with the like, be required to make a man an heretick; for such things cannot be evidenced, or made out, but only (for the most part) by most obscure conjectures, and such as will scarcely satisfy a charitable judgment. Papists indeed, who have laid it down for a principle, that a contradiction to the doctrine of the Church, known to be so, and continued in after admonition, doth infallibly make a man an heretick, are very clear, uniform, and settled in that, which they have made the ground, warrant, and foundation of slaying millions of men, professing the name of Christ: but for all other Christians, who acknowledge an infallibility in the rule, but no infallibility in any for the discovery of the truth of that rule, (though exceeding clear and perspicuous in things necessary) for them I say, understanding, and keeping close to their own principles, it is a most difficult thing to determine of heresy; with an assurance, that they are so out of danger of erring in that determination, as to make it a ground of rigorous proceedings against those of whom they have so concluded. Some things indeed are so clearly in the Scripture laid down and determined, that to question or deny them, bespeaks a spirit self-condemned, in that which he doth profess: that twice two makes four, that he that runneth, moveth; are not things more evident to reason, than many things in the Scripture are to every captivated understanding: a wilful deviation in such merits no charity. But generally errors are about things hard to be understood, not so clearly appearing, and concerning which it is very difficult to pass the sentence of heresy. No judge of heresy since the Apostles days, but hath been obnoxious to error in that judgment; and those who have been forwardest to assume a judicature, and power of discerning between truth and error, so as to have others regulated thereby, have erred most foully. Of old it was generally conceived to be in Councils. Now I should acknowledge myself obliged to any man, that would direct me to a Council, since that *Acts xv.* which I may not be forced from the word to assert, that it, in some thing or other, went astray.

Luther feared not to affirm of the first and best of general synods, that he understood not the Holy Ghost to speak in it; and that the canons thereof were but plain hay and stubble. Yea and Beza, that such was the folly, ignorance, ambition, wickedness of many bishops in the best times, that you would suppose the Devil to have been president in their assemblies^a: inasmuch as Nazianzen complained, that he never saw a good end of any; and affirmed, that he was resolved never to come at them more. And in truth, the fightings and brawls, diabolical arts of defamation and accusing one another, abominable pride, ambition, and affectation of preeminence, which appeared in most of them, did so far prevail, that in the issue they became (as one was entitled) dens of thieves, rather than conventions of humble and meek disciples of Jesus Christ; until at length the Holy Dove being departed, an ominous owl overlooked the Lateran fathers; and though with much clamour they destroyed the appearing fowl, yet the foul spirit of darkness and error wrought as effectually in them as ever. But to close this discourse; ignorance of mens invincible prejudices, of their convictions, strong persuasions, desires, aims, hopes, fears, inducements, sensibleness of our own infirmities, failings, misapprehensions, darkness, knowing but in

^a Hic prorsus non intelligo sanctum Spiritum in hoc concilio: hi omnes articuli fenum, stramen, ligna, stipula fuerunt. Luth.

^b In optimis illis temporibus, ea fuit nonnullorum episcoporum, partim ambiguo, partim futilitas & ignorantia, &c. Beza. prefat. ad no. Testa.

^c Ego, si vera scribere oportet, ita animo affectus sum, ut omnia episcoporum concilia fugiam, quoniam nullius concilii finem laetum faustumque vidi: nec quod depulsionem malorum potius quam accessionem & incrementum habueris: Greg. Naz. Ep. ad Procop.

part, should work in us a charitable opinion of poor erring creatures, that do it perhaps with as upright, sincere hearts and affections, as some enjoy truth. *Austin*¹ tells the *Manichees*, the most paganish hereticks that ever were, that they only raged and were high against them, who knew not what it was to seek the truth, and escape error; with what ardent prayers the knowledge of truth is obtained. And how tender is *Salvian*² in his judgment of the *Arians*? They are, saith he, hereticks, but know it not; hereticks to us, but not to themselves: nay, they think themselves so catholick, that they judge us to be hereticks, what they are to us, that are we to them: they err, but with a good mind, and for this cause God shews patience towards them.

Now if any shall dissent from what I have before asserted concerning this particular, I would entreat him to lay down some notes, whereby heresies may infallibly be discerned to be such, and he shall not find me repugning.

6. That great consideration ought to be had of that sovereign dictate of nature, the sum of all moral duties, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*; do not that unto others, which you would not have done to you, were you in the same condition with them. In the business in hand, we are supposed by others to be in that estate, wherein we suppose those to be of whom we speak; those others being to us, what we are to them. Now truly if none of the former inconveniences and iniquities which we recounted, *Assertion* 2, 3, 4, or the like, do accompany erring persons, it will be something difficult to make it appear, how we may, if enjoying authority over them, impose any coercion, restraint, or punishment on them, which we would not acknowledge to be justly laid on us by others (supposing it should be laid) having authority over us, convinced that our persuasion differing from them, is false and erroneous. No sort of Christians but are hereticks and schismatics to some Christians in authority; and it may be their lot to live under the power and jurisdiction of men so persuaded of them, where they ought to expect, that the same measure will be given unto them, which in other places they have consented to mete out to others.

But men will say, and all men pleading the cause of non-toleration in its full extent do say, that they are hereticks, and erroneous persons, whom we do oppose: we ourselves are orthodox, and no law of nature, no dictate of the Scripture requires, that we should think it just to render unto them that are orthodox, as unto them that are hereticks, seducers, and false teachers. Because thieves are punished, shall honest men fear that they shall be so too? But a thief is a thief in all the world, unto all men: in opinions it is not so: he is a heretick, that is to be punished, but to whom? in whose judgment? in his own? no more than we are in ours: but he is so to them that judge him: true. Put case a Protestant were to be judged by a Papist, as a thousand saints have been: is he not the worst of hereticks to his judge? These things turn in a circle: what we are to ourselves, that he is to himself: what he is to us, that we are unto others that may be our judges. But however, you will say, we are in the truth, and therefore ought to go free. Now truly this is the same paralogism: who says we are in the truth? others? no, ourselves: who says erroneous persons (as so supposed) are hereticks, or the like? they themselves? no, but we: and those that are to us, as we are to them, say no less of us. Let us not suppose that all the world will stoop to us, because we have the truth, as we affirm, but they do not believe. If we make the rule of our proceedings against others to be our conviction, that they are erroneous; others will, or may make theirs of us, to be their rule of proceeding against us. We do thus to them, because we so judge of them: will not others, who have the same judgment of us, as we of them, do the like unto us? Now here I profess that I do not desire to extend any thing in this discourse, to the patronizing of any error whatsoever, I mean any thing, so commonly esteemed in the reformed Churches, as myself owning any such; much less to the procuring of a licentious immunity, for every one in his way; and least of all to countenance men walking disorderly in any regard, especially in the particulars before recounted; but only to shew how warily, and upon what sure principles, that

¹ Illi in vos seviunt, qui nesciunt cum quo labore verum inveniantur, & quam difficile caveantur errores, &c. Aug.

² Apud nos sunt heretici, apud se non sunt: quod ergo illi nobis sunt, hoc nos illis, &c. Salv. de prov. &c.

cannot be retorted on us, we ought to proceed, when any severity is necessarily required, in case of great danger; and how in lesser things, if the unity of faith may in some comfortable measure be kept, then to assert the proposition in its full latitude, urging and pleading for christian forbearance, even in such manner to be granted, as we would desire it from them, whom we do forbear; for truly in those disputable things, we must acknowledge ourselves in the same series with other men, unless we can produce express patents for our exemptions. But some perhaps will say, that even in such things as these *Gamaliel's* counsel is not good; better all go on with punishing that can; truth will not be suppressed, but error will. Good God! was not truth oppressed by antichristian tyranny? was not outward force the engine that for many generations kept truth in corners? But of this afterwards.

Now I am mistaken, if this principle, that the civil magistrate ought to condemn, suppress, and persecute every one that he is convinced to err, though in smaller things, do not at length, in things of greater importance, make Christendom a very theatre of bloody murders, killing, slaying, imprisoning men round in a compass; until the strongest becomes dictator to the rest, and he alone be supposed to have infallible guidance, all the rest to be hereticks, because overcome and subdu'd (when I speak of death and killing in this discourse, I understand not only forcible death itself, but that also which is equivalent thereunto, as banishment, or perpetual imprisonment) I had almost said, that it is the interest of mortality, to consent generally to the persecution of a man maintaining such a destructive opinion.

7. That whatsoever restraint, or other punishment may be allowed in case of grosser errors, yet slaying of hereticks for simple heresy, as they call it, for my part I cannot close withal; nor shall ever give my vote to the burning, hanging, or killing of a man, otherwise upright, honest, and peaceable in the state, merely because he misbelieveth any point of Christian faith. Let what pretences you please be produced, or colours flourish'd, I should be very unwilling to pronounce the sentence of blood in the case of heresy. I do not intend here to dispute: but if any one will, upon protestant principles, and Scripture grounds, undertake to assert it, I promise (if God grant me life) he shall not want a convert, or an antagonist. I know the usual pretences: Such a thing is blasphemy: but search the Scripture, look upon the definitions of divines, and by all mens consent you will find heresy, in what head of religion soever it be, and blasphemy properly so called, to be exceedingly distant. Let a blasphemer undergo the law of blasphemy: but yet I think we cannot be too cautious how we place men in that damnable series, calling heaven and earth to witness the contrary. But again: To spread such errors will be destructive to souls: so are many things, which yet are not punishable with forcible death: let him that thinks so go kill Pagans and Mahometans. As such heresy is a canker, but a spiritual one, let it be prevented by spiritual means; cutting off mens heads is no proper remedy for it: if state physicians think otherwise, I say no more, but that I am not of the college, and what I have already said I submit to better judgments.

8. It may be seriously considered, upon a view of the state and condition of Christians, since their name was known in the world, whether this doctrine of punishing erring persons with death, imprisonment, banishment, and the like, under the name of hereticks, hath not been as useful and advantageous for error, as truth; nay, whether it hath not appeared the most pernicious invention that ever was broached: in the first, second, and third ages we hear little of it; nothing for it; something against it: much afterwards against it, in *Austin* and others. *Marlinus*, the famous French bishop, rejected the communion of a company of his associate bishops, because they had consented with *Maximus* the Emperor, unto the death of the *Priscillianists*, as vile hereticks as ever breathed. At the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, when the *Arians* and orthodox had successively procured the supreme magistrate to join with them, men were killed and dismember'd like beasts: banishments, imprisonments, plunderings, especially by the *Arians* were as frequent, as in new subdued kingdoms. But never was this tragedy so acted to the

⁸ Τὸς μισῶντας τὸν Θεὸν μισοῦν καὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἰσχυροῖς αὐτοῦ ἐκτελέσει, ἢ μὴ καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ τὸν Θεὸν τὸν μὴ ἰδόντα τὸν κύριον καὶ Θεόν· ἀλλ' ἰδεῖν μὴ ἐχῶν, καὶ χωρίζεται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. Ignat. Epist. ad Philad.

life, as by the worshippers of images on the one side, and their adversaries on the other ^a: which difference rose about the year 130, and was carried on with that barbarous outrage on both sides, especially by the *Iconolatæ* (as the worst were ever best at such proceedings) as is wonderful to consider. Now excepting only those idolatrous hereticks in the last, who were paid home in their own coin, for a thousand years together this doctrine was put in practice against none almost, but the martyrs of Jesus. The *Roman* stories of the killing of hereticks, are all martyrologies; thousands slain for hereticks now lie under the altar, crying for vengeance, and shall one day sit upon thrones, judging their judges. So that where one man hath suffered for an error, under the name of an heretick, five hundred under the same notion have suffered for truth: a principle would seem more befitting Christians to spare five hundred for the saving of one guiltless person. Truth hath felt more of the teeth of this scorpion, than error: and clearly it grew up by degrees with the whole mystery of iniquity. In the Gospel we have nothing like it: the acts of Christ purging the temple, *Peter* pronouncing the fate of *Ananias*, and *Paul* smiting *Elymas* with blindness, seem to me heterogeneous. The first laws of *Constantine* speak liberty and freedom ⁱ. Pecuniary mulcts afterwards were added, and general edicts against all sects, and so it is put over into the hands of the *Arians*, who exceedingly cherished it: yet for a good while pretences must be sought out, *Eustachius* of *Antioch* must be accused of adultery, *Athanasius* of sedition, magick, and I know not what, that a colour might be had for their persecution ^k. The *Arian* Kings in *Africa*, were the first that owned it, *γυμνὴ κεφαλῇ*, and acted according to their persuasions. Methinks I hear the cries of poor dismembred, mangled creatures, for the faith of the Holy Trinity! Next to these, through a few civil constitutions of some weak Emperors, it wholly comes to reside in the hands of the Pope, Kings and Princes are made his executioners, and he plays his game to the purpose. Single persons serve not this *Bel* and *Dragon*, whole nations ^l must be slaughtered, that he may be drunk with blood. He sends whole armies to crucify Christ afresh, he gives every one of his soldiers a cross; hence followed cruel fights, bloody battels, wasting of kingdoms, raging against the names, ashes, sepulchres of the dead, with more than hearthenish cruelty: such evil fruits hath this bitter root sent forth, the streams of this fountain have all been blood; so that it cannot be denied, but that a judicature of truth, and the contrary assumed, with a forcible backing of the sentence, was the bottom stone in the foundation, and highest in the corner of the tower of *Babel*: and I believe that upon search it will appear, that error hath not been advanced by any thing in the world so much, as by usurping a power for its suppression. In divers contests that the Pope had with others, the truth was on his side (as in the business of *Athanasius*, and others in the *East* deposed by the *Arians* ^m) now who would not have thought, that his standing up with all earnestness for the truth, would not have been the ruin of the Devil's kingdom of darkness, and almost have spoiled the plot of the mystery of iniquity; when the truth is, the largest steps that ever the man of sin took towards his throne, was by usurping of power to suppress errors and heresies. It would be a great encouragement to use that way for the extirpation of errors (if any such be, besides the preaching of the Gospel, and convictions from thence) which any one could produce and give assurance that it hath not been tried, or been tried and proved ineffectual for the supplantation of truth; and if such a way be not produced, what if both should grow together until harvest?

9. Let us not be too hasty in pressing any opinion arising and divulged with odious consequences of sedition, turbulency, and the like, because tumults and troubles happen in the commonwealth, where it is asserted: a coincidence of events is one of the principal causes of error and misjudgings in the world: because errors and tumults arise together, therefore one is the cause of the other, may be an argument, *a baculo ad angulum*. It is a hard thing to charge them with sedition, who protest against it: and none can make it appear, that it is *contraria factis*, by any of their actions, but only because it is fit they should bear the blame of what happeneth evilly in

^a Theophanes. histor. Miscel. lib. 22. cap. 30.

^k Euseb. vit. Const. lib. 2. cap. 27.

Bohemians.

^m Socrat. lib. 2. cap. 11.

^l Socrat. Evag. Rufinus. Sozom.

ⁱ Albigenes. Waldenses.

their days. Upon every disaster in the empire, the noise of old was, *Christianos ad leones*^a: for our parts we ought to remember, that we were strangers in *Egypt*; it is but little more than an hundred years since all mouths were opened and filled with reproaches against that glorious Reformation, wherein we rejoice. Was it not the unanimous voice of all the adversaries thereof, that a new religion was brought in, tending to the immediate ruin of all states and commonwealths, attended with rebellion, the mother of sedition? Have we not frequent apologies of our divines for the confutation of such false, malicious, and putrid criminations? It is true indeed, the light of the Gospel breaking out, was accompanied with war and not peace (according to the prediction of our Saviour) whereof the Gospel was no more the cause, than *John Diazius* was of that horrible murder, when his brains were chopt out with an ax by his brother *Alphonsus*^b; because he professed the Gospel. Hence *Luther*, the vehemency of whose spirit gave no way to glosses and temporizing excuses, plainly affirms those tumults to be such necessary appendixes of the preaching of the Gospel, that he should not believe the word of God to be abroad in the world, if he saw it not accompanied with tumults, which he had rather partake in, than perish under the wrath of God in an eternal tumult^c: the truth must go on, though thereby the world should be reduced to its primitive chaos and confusion. Were it not a perpetual course for men of every persuasion to charge sedition, and the like, upon that which they would have suppressed, knowing that no name is more odious unto them who have power to effect their desire; and did I not find that some, who have had much ado, whilst they were sheep, to keep off that imputation from themselves, within a few years, becoming lions, have laid it home upon others, as peaceable as they; I might perhaps be more rigid than now these discoveries will suffer me to be: far be it from me to apologize for truth itself, if seditious; only I abhor those false, malicious criminations, whereby God's people in these days wherein we live, have exceedingly suffered. It hath pleased God so to order things in this kingdom, that the work of recovering his worship to its purity, and restoring the civil state to its liberty, should be both carried on at the same time by the same persons. Are there none now in this kingdom, to whom this reforming is an almost everting of God's worship? And are there none that have asserted that our new religion hath caused all those tumults and bloodshed? And doth not every unprejudiced man see, that these are hellish lies, and malicious accusations, having indeed neither ground nor colour, but only their co-incidence in respect of time? Is any wise man moved with their clamours? Are their aspersions considerable? Are we the only men that have been thus injuriously traduced? Remember the difference between *Elijah* and *Abab*, what was laid to the charge of *Paul*, see the apologies of the old Christians, and speak what you find.

Much might here be added concerning the qualifications, carriages, humility, peaceableness of erring persons: all which ought to be considered, and our proceedings towards them to be, if not regulated, yet much swayed by such considerations. Some I have known myself, that I dare say the most curious enquirer into their ways, that sees with eyes of flesh, would not be able to discover any thing but mere conviction and tenderness of conscience, that causeth them to own the opinions, which different from others they do embrace. Others again so exceeding supercilious, scorning, proud, selfish, so given to contemning of all others, reviling and undervaluing of their adversaries, that the blindest pity cannot but see much carnalness and iniquity in their ways. These things then deserve to be weighed, all passion and particular interest being set aside. And then, if the die be cast, and we must forward, let us take along with us these two cautions.

(1.) So to carry ourselves in all our censures, every one in his sphere (ecclesiastical discipline being preserved as pure and unmixed from secular power as possible) that it may appear to all, that it is the error which men maintain which is so odious unto us, and not the consequent or their dissent from us, whether by subducting themselves from our power, or withdrawing from communion: for if this latter be made the cause of our proceeding against any, there must be one law for them all, all that

^a Arnob.^b Sleid. Com.^c Ego nisi tumultus istos viderem, verbum Dei in mundo non esse dicerem. Præ-
eligimus temporali tumultu collidi, quam æterno tumultu sub ira Dei conteri. Luth. de Ser. Art. cap. 32, 33, 34.

will not bow to the fiery furnace; recusancy is the fault, and that being the same in all, must have the same punishment, which would be such an unrighteous inequality, as is fit for none but antichrist to own.

(2.) That nothing be done to any, but that the bound and farthest end of it be seen at the beginning, and not leave way and room for new persecution upon new pretences. *Cedo alteram & alteram*, one stripe sometimes makes way for another, and how know I that men will stay at thirty nine? *Principiis obsta.*

All these things being considered, I cannot so well close with them, who make the least allowance of dissent to be the mother of abominations: words and hated phrases may easily be heaped up to a great number, to render any thing odious which we have a mind to oppose; but the proving of an imposed evil, or absurdity, is sometimes a labour too difficult for every undertaker. And so I hope I have said enough to warrant my own hesitancy in this particular. Some might now expect, that I should here positively set down what is my judgment concerning errors and erroneous persons, dissenting from the truth received and acknowledged by authority, with respect unto their toleration; unto whom I answer: That to consider the power of the magistrate about things of religion, and over consciences; the several restraints that have been used in this case, or are pleaded for; the difference between dangerous fundamental errors, and others; the several interests of men, and ways of disengaging; the extent of communion, and the absolute necessity of a latitude to be allowed in some things: with such other things as would be requisite for a full handling of the matter in hand; ask a longer discourse, and more exactness, than the few hours allotted to this *Appendix* can afford. Only for the present I ask, if any will take the pains to inform me: 1. What they mean by a non-toleration? Whether only a not-countenancing, nor holding communion with them; or if crushing and punishing them, then how? to what degree? by what means? where they will undoubtedly bound? 2. What the error is, concerning which the enquiry is made? the clear opposition thereof to the word of God? the danger of it? the repugnancy that is in it to peace, quietness, and the power of Godliness? 3. What, or who are the erring persons? how they walk? in what manner of conversation? What is their behaviour towards others, not of their own persuasion? What Gospel means have been used for their conviction? What may be supposed to be their prejudices, motives, interests, and the like? And then, if it be worth asking, I shall not be backward to declare my opinion. And truly without the consideration of these things, and other such circumstances, how a right judgment can be passed in this case I see not.

And so hoping the courteous reader will look with a candid eye upon these hasty lines, rather poured out than written; and consider that a day's pains in these times may serve for that, which is but for a day's use; the whole is submitted to his judgment, by him, who professeth his all in this kind to be, The love of truth and peace.

I have known many that have been by the most curious enquiry into their ways that they with eyes of flesh would not be able to discover any thing but mere conviction and tenderness of conscience, that counsel them to own the opinions, which dissent from others they do cherish. Others again to exceeding suspicious, looking proud, selfish, is given to condemning of all others, reviling and undervaluing of their advantages, that the blindest may not see much cunning and insinuation in their ways. These things then desire to be weighed, all passion and particular interest being set aside. And then, if the spirit be calm, and we must forward, let us take along with us these two cautions.

1. Every one in all our countries, every one in his sphere (ecclesiastical or civil) is to be preserved in pure and unadorned from secular power as possible; that it may appear to all, that it is the error which men maintain which is to others unto us, and not the consequence of their dissent from us, whether by subduing them, or withdrawing from communion: for if this latter be made the cause of our proceeding against any, there must be one law for them all, all that

SERMON

* S E R M O N XXX.

Eben-ezer: A MEMORIAL of the Deliverance of
Essex County, and Committee. In two Sermons.

The former of these Sermons was preach'd at *Colchester*, before his Excellency, on a day of thanksgiving for its Surrender: the other at *Rumford*, to the Committee (who were imprisoned by the Enemy) *Sept. 28, 1648*. Being a day of thanksgiving for their Deliverance.

To His EXCELLENCY

THOMAS Lord FAIRFAX, &c.

SIR,



Lmighty God having made you the instrument of that deliverance and peace, which in the county of *Essex* we do enjoy, next to his own goodness, the remembrance thereof is due unto your name. *Those who honour him, he will honour; and those who despise him, shall be lightly esteemed, 1 Sam. ii. 30.* Part of these ensuing sermons being preached before your Excellency, and now by providence called forth to publick view, I am emboldned to dedicate them unto your Name, as a small mite of that abundant thankfulness, wherein all peace-loving men of this county stand obliged unto you.

It was the custom of former days, in the provinces of the *Roman* Empire, to erect statues and monuments of grateful remembrance to those presidents and governours, who in the administration of their authority behaved themselves with wisdom, courage, and fidelity. Yea instruments of great deliverances and blessings, through corrupted nature's folly, became the pagans deities.

There is scarce a county in this kingdom wherein, and not one from which, your Excellency hath not deserved a more lasting mo-

* N. B. These two Sermons having no regular division in the first Edition, we were obliged to print them together without any Distinction.

^a *Lubens meritoque.*

nument than ever was erected of *Corinthian* brass. But if the Lord be pleased that your worth shall dwell only in the praises of his people, it will be your greater glory, that being the place which himself hath chosen to inhabit. Now for a testification of this is this only intended; beyond this towards men, God pleading for you, you need nothing but our silence; the issue of the last engagements, whereunto you were called, and enforced, answering, yea, outgiving your former undertakings, giving ample testimony of the continuance of God's presence with you in your army, having stopped the mouths of many gainfayers, and called to the residue in the language of the dumb speaking *Ægyptian* hieroglyphick, ^{α γινόμενοι κ' ἀπα- γινόμενοι, θεός πιστέ ἀναστέλει} *Men of all sorts know, that God hateth impudence.*

It was said of the *Romans* in the raising of their empire, that they were *sæpe praelio victi, bello nunquam*: so naked hath the bow of God been made for your assistance, that you have failed neither in battel nor war.

Truly had not our eyes beheld the rise and fall of this latter storm, we could not have been persuaded that the former achievements of the army, under your conduct, could have been parallel'd. But he who always enabled them to outdo not only others, but themselves, hath in this carried them out to outdo whatever before himself had done by them, that they might shew more kindness and faithfulness in the latter end, than in the beginning. The weary ox treadeth hard: dying bites are often desperate: half ruined *Carthage* did more perplex *Rome*, than when it was entire: *Hydra's* heads in the fable were encreased by their loss, and every new stroke begat a new opposition: such seemed the late tumultuating of the exasperated party in this nation.

In the many undertakings of the enemy, all which themselves thought secure, and others esteemed probable, if they had prevailed in any one, too many reasons present themselves to persuade they would have done so in all. But to none of those worthies, which went out under your command to several places in the kingdom, can you say with *Augustus* to *Varus*, upon the slaughter of his legions by *Arminius* in *Germany*, *Quintile Vare, redde Legiones*, God having carried them all on with success and victory.

One especially in his northern expedition, I cannot pass over with silence, who although he will not, dare not say of his undertakings, as *Cæsar* of his *Asian* war, *veni, vidi, vici*, knowing who works all his works for him; nor shall we say of the enemies multitude, what captain *Gam* did of the *French*, being sent to spy out their numbers, before the battel of *Agin-court*, that there were of them *enough to kill, and enough to take, and enough to run away*; yet of him and them, both he and we may freely say, *It is nothing with the Lord to help, either with many, or with them that have no power.*

* *Plus, de Iside & Osir.*

The war being divided, and it being impossible your Excellency should be in every place of danger, according to your desire, the Lord was pleased to call you out personally unto two of the most hazardous, dangerous, and difficult undertakings: where besides the travel, labour, watching, heat and cold, by day and night, whereunto you were exposed, even the life of the meanest soldier in your army was not in more imminent danger, than oftentimes was your own. And indeed during your abode at the *Leager* amongst us, in this only were our thoughts burdened with you, *That self-preservation was of no more weight in your councils and undertakings.* And I beseech you pardon my boldness, in laying before you this expostulation of many thousands (if we may say to him who hath saved a kingdom, what was sometimes said unto a King) *Know you not that you are worth ten thousands of us, why should you quench such a light in Israel?*

Sir, I account it among those blessings of providence, wherewith the days of my pilgrimage have been seasoned, that I had the happiness for a short season to attend your Excellency, in the service of my Master, Jesus Christ: as also that I have this opportunity, in the name of many, to cast in my *χαίρε* into the kingdom's congratulations of your late successes. What thoughts concerning your person, my breast is possessed withal, as in their storehouse they yield me delightful refreshment; so they shall not be drawn out, to the disturbance of your self-denial. The goings forth of my heart, in reference to your Excellency, shall be chiefly to the Most-high, that being more than conqueror in your spiritual and temporal warfare, you may be long continued for a blessing to this nation, and all the people of God.

Sir,

Your Excellencies

Coggeshall, Essex,

Oct. 5. 1648.

Most humble

And devoted Servant,

JOHN OWEN.

To the Worthy and Honoured Sir *William Maskam*, Sir *William Rowe*, with the rest of the Gentlemen of the Committee, lately under imprisonment by the Enemy in *Colchester*: As also, To the Honoured Sir *Henry Mildmay* of *Wansted*, Col. Sir *Thomas Honywood*, with the rest of the Gentlemen and Officers, lately acting and engaged against the same Enemy.

SIRS,



HE righteous judgments of God having brought a disturbance and noise of war, for our security, unthankfulness, murmuring, and devouring one another, upon our country, those who were intrusted with the power thereof, turned their streams into several channels. Troublous times are times of trial.

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand, *Dan. xii. 10.* Some God called out to suffer, some to do, leaving treacherous dealers to deal treacherously.

Of the two first sorts are you. This honour have you received from God, either with patience and constancy to undergo unvoluntarily a dangerous restraint; or with resolution and courage voluntarily to undertake a hazardous engagement, to give an example that faith and truth, so shamefully despised in these evil days, have not altogether forsaken the sons of men.

It is not in my thoughts to relate unto yourselves, what some of you suffered, and what some of you did: what difficulties and perplexities you wrestled withal, within and without the walls of your enemies (the birds in the cage and the field having small cause of mutual emulation) for that which remains of these things is only a returnal of praise to him, by whom all your works are wrought.

It cannot be denied, but that providence was eminently exalted in the work of your protection and delivery: yet truly, for my part, I cannot but conceive that it vails to the efficacy of grace, in preventing you from putting forth your hands unto iniquity, in any sinful compliance with the enemies of our peace. The times wherein we live have found the latter more rare than the former. What God wrought in you, hath the pre-eminence of what he wrought for you: as much as to be given up to the sword is a lesser evil, than to be given up to a treacherous spirit.

What God hath done for you all, all men know; what I desire you should do for God, I know no reason why I should make alike publick.

OT

The

The general and particular civilities I have received from all, and every one of you, advantaging me to make it out in another way. I shall add nothing then to what you will meet withal in the following discourse, but only my desire, that you would seriously ponder the **11** observation, with the deductions from thence. For the rest, I no way fear, but that that God who hath so appeared with you, and for you, will so indulge to your spirits the presence and guidance of his grace, in these shaking times, that if any speak evil of you as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ, and glorify God in the day of visitation.

For these following Sermons, one of them was preached at your desire, and is now published upon your request. The first part of the labour I willingly and chearfully underwent; the latter merely in obedience to your commands, being acted in it more by your judgments than mine own: you were persuaded (mean as it was) it might be for the glory of God to have it made publick; whereupon my answer was, and is, That for that, not only it, but myself also, should by his assistance be ready for the press. The failings and infirmities attending the preaching and publishing of it, (which the Lord knows to be very many) are mine: the inconveniencies of publishing such a tractate from so weak a hand, whereof the world is full, must be yours: the fruit and benefit both of the one and other, is his; for whose pardon of infirmities, and removal of inconveniencies, shall be, as for you, and all the Church of God, the prayer of,

Sirs,

Your most humble

Coggeshall Oct. 5.

1648.

And obliged Servant,

In the Work of the Lord,

JOHN OWEN.

I i i

HAB

HABAKKUK iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Sigionoth. O Lord, I have heard thy speech and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman, and the holy One from mount Paran, Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light, he had horns coming out of his hand, and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations, and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses, and thy chariots of salvation? Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word, Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.



Of this chapter there are four parts.

First, The title and preface of it, *ver. 1.*

Secondly, The prophet's main request in it, *ver. 2.*

Thirdly, Arguments to sustain his faith in that request, from *ver. 3, to 17.*

Fourthly, A resignation of himself, and the whole issue of his desires unto God, from *ver. 17, to the end.*

We shall treat of them in order.

The prophet ^a having had visions from God, and prediscoveries of many approaching judgments, in the *first and second chapters*, in this, by faithful prayer, sets himself to obtain a sure footing, and quiet abode in those nation-destroying storms.

Verse 1. A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, that is the title of it. And an excellent prayer it is, full of arguments to strengthen faith, acknowledgment of God's sovereignty, power, and righteous judgments, with resolutions to a contented, joyful, rolling him upon him under all dispensations.

I. *Observation.* Prayer is the believer's constant, sure retreat in an evil time, in a time of trouble.

It is the righteous man's wings to the *name of the Lord* which is his *strong tower*, Prov. xviii. 10. A ^b Christian soldier's sure reserve in the day of battel: if all other forces be overthrow, here he will abide by it, no power under heaven can prevail upon him to give one step backwards. Hence that title of *Psal. cii. A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed.* 'Tis the overwhelmed man's refuge and employment: when he swooneth with anguish (as in the original) this fetches him to himself again. So also, *Psal. lxi. 2, 3.* In our greatest distresses let neither unbelief, nor self contrivances, juggle us out of this way to the rock of our salvation.

II. *Observation.* Prophets discoveries of fearful judgments must be attended with fervent prayers.

That messenger hath done but half his business who delivers his errand, but returns not an answer. He that brings God's message of threats unto his people, must return his peoples message of entreaties unto him. Some think they have fairly dis-

^a The time of his prophecy is conceived to be about the end of Josiah's reign, not long before the first Caldean invasion.

^b Preces & lacrymae sunt arma Ecclesiae. Tertul.

charged their duty, when they have revealed the will of God to man, without labouring to reveal the condition and desires of men unto God. He that is more frequent in the pulpit to his people, than he is in his closet for his people, is but a sorry watchman. *Moses* did not so, *Exod.* xxxiii. 31. neither did *Samuel* so, *1 Sam.* xii. 23. neither was it the guise of *Jeremiah* in his days, *chap.* xiv. 17. If the beginning of the prophecy be (as it is) *The burden of Habakkuk*, the close will be (as it is) *The prayer of Habakkuk*. Where there is a burden upon the people, there must be prayer for the people. Wo to them who have denounced desolations, and not poured out supplications: such men delight in the evil, which the prophet puts far from him, *Jer.* xvii. 16. *I have not desired the woful day [O Lord] thou knowest.*

Now this prayer is upon *Sigionoth*. That is, 1. it is tuned to a song: 2. such a song.

1. That it is a song, penned in metre, and how done so (1.) to take the deeper impression (2.) to be the better retained in memory (3.) to work more upon the affections (4.) to receive the ingredients of poetical loftiness for adorning the majesty of God, with (5.) the use of songs in the old Church (6.) and for the present (7.) their times and seasons, as among the people of God, so all nations of old: of all, or any of these, being besides my present purpose, I shall not treat.

2. That it is upon *Sigionoth*, a little may be spoken. The word is once in another place (and no more) used in the title of a song, and that is *Psal.* vii. *Shigionaion of David*: and it is variously rendred. It seems to be taken from the word *אָשׁוּ* *erravit*, to err, or wander variously. *Prov.* v. 20. The word is used for delight, to stray with delight. In her love *אָשׁוּ* *thou shalt err with delight*, we have translated it, *be ravished*, noting affections out of order. The word then holds out a delightful wandring and variety: and this literally, because those two songs, *Psal.* vii. and *Hab.* iii. are not tied to any one certain kind of metre, but have various verses for the more delight: which, though it be not proper to them alone, yet in them the Holy Ghost would have it especially noted.

But now surely the kernel of this shell is sweeter than so. Is not this written also for their instruction who have no skill in *Hebrew* songs? The true reason of their metre is lost to the most learned. Are not then God's variable dispensations towards his held out under these variable tunes, nor all fitted to one string? nor all alike pleasant and easy? Are not the several tunes of mercy and judgment in these songs? Is not here affliction and deliverance, desertion and recovery, darkness and light in this variously? Doubtless it is so.

III. *Observation.* God often calls his people unto songs upon *Sigionoth*.

He keeps them under various dispensations, that so drawing out all their affections, their hearts may make the sweeter melody unto him. They shall not have all hony, nor all gall: all judgment, lest they be broken, nor all mercy, lest they be proud. *Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God, thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions*, *Psal.* xcix. 8. Here is a song upon *Sigionoth*: they are heard in their prayers, and forgiven; there is the sweetest of mercies: vengeance is taken of their inventions, there's a tune of judgment. By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation, *Psal.* lxxv. 5. is a song of the same tune. To be answered in righteousness, what sweeter mercy in the world? Nothing more refreshes the panting soul, than an answer of its desires: but to have this answer by terrible things, that string strikes a humbling, a mournful note. *Israel* hears of deliverance by *Moses*,⁴ and at the same time have their bondage doubled by *Pharaoh*: there's a song upon *Sigionoth*. Is it not so in our days? precious mercies, and dreadful judgments jointly poured out upon the land. We are clothed by our Father, like *Joseph* by his, in a party coloured coat, *Gen.* xxxvii. 3. here a piece of unexpected deliverance, and there a piece of deserved correction, at the same hour we may rejoice at the conquest of our enemies, and mourn at the loss of our harvest. Victories for his own name's sake, and showers for our sins sake; both from the same hand, at the same time. The cry of every soul, is like the cry of the multitude of old and young at the laying the founda-

³ *Graviter in eum decernitur, cui etiam ipsa connectio denegatur.* Prosp. Sent.

⁴ *Duplicantur lateres quando venit Moses.*

tion of the second temple: *Many shouted aloud for joy, and many wept with a loud voice, so that it was a mixt noise, and the several noises could not be distinguished,* Ezra iii. 12, 13. A mixed cry is in our spirits, and we know not which is loudest in the day of our visitation. I could instance in sundry particulars, but that every one's observation will save me that easy labour. And this the Lord doth.

1. To fill ^e all our sails towards himself at once; to exercise all our affections. I have heard, that a full wind behind the ship drives her not so fast forward, as a side wind, that seems almost as much against her, as with her: and the reason they say is, because a full wind fills but some of her sails, which keep it from the rest, that they are empty; when a side wind fills all her sails, and sets her speedily forward. Which way ever we go in this world, our affections are our sails; and according as they are spread and filled, so we pass on, swifter or slower, whither we are steering. Now if the Lord should give us a full wind, and continual gale of mercies, it would fill but some of our sails, some of our affections, joy, delight, and the like: but when he comes with a side wind, a dispensation that seems almost as much against us, as for us, then he fills all our sails, takes up all our affections, making his works wide and broad enough to entertain them every one; then are we carried freely and fully, towards the haven where we would be. ^f A song upon *Sigionoth* leaves not one string of our affections untuned. It is a song that reacheth every line of our hearts, to be framed by the grace and spirit of God. Therein, hope, fear, reverence with humility and repentance have a share; as well as joy, delight, and love, with thankfulness. Interchangeable dispensations take up all our affections, with all our graces; for they are gracious affections, exercised and seasoned with grace, of which we speak. The stirring of natural affections, as merely such, is but the moving of a dunghil to draw out a stinking steam, a thing the Lord neither aimeth at, nor delighteth in: their joys are his provocation, and *he laugheth in the day of their calamity, when their fear cometh*, Prov. i. 26, 27.

2. To keep them in continual ^g dependance upon himself. He hath promised his own daily bread, not goods laid up for many years. Many children have been undone by their parents giving them too large a stock to trade for themselves; it has made them spendthrifts, careless, and wanton. Should the Lord entrust his people with a continued stock of mercy, perhaps they would be *full and deny him, and say, who is the Lord?* Prov. xxx. 9. *Jesurun* did so, *Deut.* xxxiii. 14, 15. *Ephraim was filled according to her pasture, and forgot the Lord*, *Hos.* xiii. 6. Neither on the other side will he be always chiding. *His anger shall not burn forever* very fore. It is our infirmity, at the least, if we say, *God hath forgotten to be gracious, and shut up his tender mercies in displeasure*, *Psal.* lxxvii. 9. But laying one thing against another, he keeps the heart of his in an even balance, in a continual dependance upon himself, that they may neither be wanton through mercy, nor discouraged by too much oppression. Our tender Father is therefore neither always feeding, nor always correcting. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night; but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light*, saith the prophet *Zech.* xiv. 6, 7. seeking out God's dispensations towards his, ending in joy and light in the evening.

Use. Labour to have your hearts right tuned for songs on *Sigionoth*, sweetly to answer all God's dispensations in their choice variety. That instrument will make no musick that hath but some strings in tune. If when God strikes with mercy upon the string of joy and gladness, we answer pleasantly; but when he touches upon that of ^h sorrow and humiliation, we suit it not; we are broken instruments, that make no melody unto God. We must know how to receive good and evil at his hand. *He hath made every thing beautiful in its time*, *Eccles.* iii. 11. every thing in that whole variety which his wisdom hath produced. A well tuned heart must have all its strings, all its affections, ready to answer every touch of God's finger,

*Namque bonos non blanda inflant, non aspera frangunt,
Sed fidei invicta gaudia vera juvant.* Profy. Epig. in sent. August.

ⁱ *Psal.* cxix. 67. *Hos.* v. 15. *Heb.* xii. 10, 11. *1 Pet.* i. 6.

² *In celo non in terra mercedem promissis reddendam. Quid alibi poscis, quod alibi dabitur?* Ambros. Offic. lib. i. cap. 16.

³ *Cum vexamur ac premimur tum maxime gratias agimus indulgentissimo patri, quod corruptelam nostram nos p[ro]p[ri]a longius procedere: hinc intelligimus nos esse Deo curae, Lactan.*

to improve judgments and mercies both at the same time. Sweet harmony ariseth out of some discords. When a soul is in a frame to rejoice with thankful obedience for mercy received, and to be humbled with soul-searching, amending repentance, for judgments inflicted at the same time, then it sings a song *on Sigionoth*, then it is fit for the days wherein we live. Indeed both mercies and judgments aim at the same end, and should be received with the same equal temper of mind. A flint is broken between a hammer and a pillow: an offender is humbled between a prison and a pardon: a hard heart may be mollified, and a proud spirit humbled between those two. In such a season the several rivulets of our affections flow naturally in the same stream. When hath a gracious soul the soundest joys, but when it hath the deepest sorrows? *Habent & gaudia vulnus*. When hath it the humblest meltings, but when it hath the most ravishing joys? Our afflictions which are naturally at the widest distance, may all swim in the same spiritual channel. Rivulets rising from several heads are carried in one stream to the ocean. As a mixture of several colours make a beautiful complexion for the body; so a mixture of divers affections under God's various dispensations, gives a comely frame unto the soul. Labour then to answer every call, every speaking providence of God, in its right kind, according to the intention thereof: and the Lord reveal his mind unto us that so we may do.

Having passed the *title*, let us look a little on those parts of the *prayer* itself that follow.

Verse 2. The beginning of it in *ver. 2.* hath two parts.

1. The frame of the prophet's spirit in his address to God: *O Jehovah, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid.*

2. His request in this his condition: *O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known, in wrath remember mercy.*

1. In the first you have

(1.) Particularly his frame: he *was afraid*, or trembled; which he wonderfully sets out, *ver. 16. When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself.*

(2.) The cause of this fear and trembling: he *heard the speech of God*. If you will ask what speech or report this was that made the prophet himself so exceedingly quake and tremble: I answer, it is particularly that which you have, *chap. i. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.* containing a dreadful denunciation of the judgments of God against the people of *Israel*, to be executed by the proud, cruel, insulting *Caldeans*. This voice, this report of God, makes the prophet tremble.

IV. *Observation.* An appearance of God in anger and threats against a people, should make his choicest secret ones among them to fear, to quake, and tremble.

Trembling of man's heart must answer the shaking of God's hand. At the delivery of the law with all its attending threats, so terrible was the sight, that *Moses* himself (tho' a mediator then) did exceedingly fear and quake, *Heb. xii. 21.* God will be acknowledged in all his goings. If men will not bow before him, he will break them. They who fear not his threatnings, shall feel his inflictions: if his word be esteemed light, his hand will be found heavy. For

In point of deserving who can say, ⁱ I have purged my heart, I am clean from sin? None ought to be fearless, unless they be senseless. God's people are so far from being always clear of procuring national judgments, that sometimes ^k judgments have come upon nations for the sins of some of God's people amongst them: as the plague in the days of *David*.

And in point of ^l suffering, who knows but they may have a deep share? The prophet's book is *written within*, as well as *without*, with *lamentation, mourning, and woe*, *Ezek. ii. ult.* If *the lion roars, who can but fear?* *Amos iii. 8.* Fear to the rooting out of security, not the shaking of Faith: fear to the pulling down of carnal presidence, not christian confidence: fear to draw out our souls in prayer, not to swallow them up in despair: fear to break the arm of flesh, but not to weaken the staff of the promise: fear that we may draw nigh to God with reverence, not

ⁱ Job xiv. 4. xv. 15, 16. Prov. xvi. 2. xx. 19.

^k 2 Sam. xxiv. 15. 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

^l Omnes seculi plaga, nobis in admonitionem, vobis in castigationem à Deo veniunt. Tertul. Apol. cap. 42.

to run from him with diffidence: in a word, to overthrow faithless presumption, and to encrease gracious submission.

2. Here is the prophet's request. And in this there are these two things,

(1.) The thing he desireth: *The reviving God's work, the remembering mercy.*

(2.) The season he desireth it in: *In the midst of the years.*

(1.) For the first, that which in the beginning of the *verse* he calls God's work, in the close of it he termeth mercy: and the *reviving his work*, is interpreted to be a *remembering mercy*. These two expressions then are parallel. The reviving of God's work towards his people is a re-acting of mercy, a bringing forth the fruits thereof, and that in the midst of the execution of wrath: as a man in the midst of another, remembering a business of more importance, instantly turneth away, and applyeth himself thereunto.

V. *Observation*, Acts of mercy are God's proper work towards his people, which he will certainly awake, and keep alive in the saddest times.

Mercy you see is his work, his proper work, as he calleth *judgment his strange act*, Isa. xxviii. 21. *He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy*, Micah vii. 18. This is his proper work; tho' it seem to sleep, he will awake it; tho' it seem to die, he will revive it. *Can a woman forget her child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee: behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me*, Isa. xlix. 16, 17.

(2.) For the season of this work, he prays that it may be accomplished *in the midst of the years*: upon which you may see what weight he lays by his repetition of it in the same *verse*. It is something doubtful what may be the peculiar sense of these words: whether *the midst of the years*^m do not denote the whole time of the peoples bondage under the *Caldeans* (whence *Junius* renders the words, *interea temporis*, noting this manner of expression, *the midst of the years*, for an *Hebraism*) during which space he intercedes for mercy for them: or whether *the midst of the years* do not denote some certain point of times, as the season of their return from captivity, about the midst of the years between their first King, and the coming of the *Messiah*, putting a period to their Church and state. Whether of these is more probable, is not needful to insist upon; this is certain, that a certain time is pointed at: which will yield us,

VI. *Observation*, The Church's mercies and deliverance have their appointed season.

In the midst of the years it shall be accomplished. As there is a decree bringing forth the wickeds destruction, *Zeph. ii. 2.* so there is a decree goes forth in its appointed season for the Church's deliverance, which cannot be gainsaid, *Dan. ix. 23.* Every *vision is for its appointed season and time*, *Hab. ii. 3.* then *it will surely come, it will not tarry*. There is a determination upon the weeks and days of the Church's sufferings and expectations, *Dan. ix. 24.* *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people*. As there are three transgressions, and four of rebels, for which God *will not turn away their punishment*, *Amos i. 3.* so three afflictions, and four of the people of God, after which he will not shut out their supplications. Hence that confidence of the prophet, *Psal cii. 13, 14.* *Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Sion: for (saith he) the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come*. There is a time, yea, a set time for favour to be shewed unto *Sion*: as a time to break down, so a time to build up, an acceptable time, a day of salvation. *It came to pass, at the end of 430 years, even the self same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out of Egypt*, *Exod. xii. 41.* As a woman with child goes not beyond her appointed months, but is pained to be delivered; no more can the fruitful decree cease from bringing forth the Church's deliverance in the season thereof.

1. Because there is an appointed period of the Church's humiliation, and bearing of her iniquities. *Israel* shall bear their iniquities in the wilderness; but this is exactly limited to the space of forty years. When their iniquity is pardoned, their warfare is accomplished, *Isa. xl. 2.* They say some men will give poison that shall work insensibly, and kill at seven years end. The great Physician of his Church

^m בקרב שנים in the inward of years.

knows how to give his sin-sick people potions, that shall work by degrees, and at such an appointed season take away all their iniquity: then they can no longer be detained in trouble. God will not continue his course of physick unto them one day beyond health recovered. *This is all the fruit of their afflictions, to take away their iniquities*, Isa. xxvii. 9. and when that is done, who shall keep bound what God will loose? When sin is taken away from within, trouble must depart from without.

2. Because the Church's sorrows are commensurate unto, and do contemporise with the joys and prosperity of God's enemies, and hers. Now wicked mens prosperity hath assured bounds: *The wickedness of the wicked shall come to an end*. There is a time when the *iniquity of the Amorites comes to the full*, Gen. xv. 16. it comes up to the brim in the appointed day of slaughter. When their wickedness hath filled the *ephah*, a talent of lead is laid upon the mouth thereof, and it is carried away on wings, *Zech. v. 6, 7, 8*. swiftly, certainly, irrevocably. If then the Church's troubles contemporise, rise and fall, with their prosperity, and her deliverance with their destruction; if the fall of *Babylon* be the rise of *Sion*; if they be the buckets which must go down, when the Church comes up; if they be the rod of the Church's chastisement, their ruin being set and appointed; so also must be the Church's mercies.

Use. In every distress learn to wait with patience for this appointed time. *He that believeth will not make haste*. Tho' it tarry, wait for it, it will surely come. He that is infinitely good, hath appointed the time, and therefore it is the best. He that is infinitely wise, hath determined the season, and therefore it is most suitable. He who is infinitely powerful, hath set it down, and therefore it shall be accomplished. Wait for it believing, wait for it praying, wait for it contending. Waiting is not a lazy hope, a sluggish expectation. When *Daniel* knew the time was come, *he prayed the more earnestly*, Dan. ix. 2, 3. You will say perhaps; what need he pray for it, when he knew the time was accomplished? I answer; the more need. Prayer helps the promise to bring forth. Because a woman's time is come, therefore shall she have no midwife? nay, therefore give her one. He that appointed their return, appointed that it should be a fruit of prayer. Wait^a contending also, in all ways wherein you shall be called out: and be not discouraged, that you know not the direct season of deliverance. *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether they shall be both alike good*, Eccles. xi. 6.

But proceed we with the prophet's prayer.

From ver. 3. to 17. he layeth down several arguments, taken from the majesty, power, providence, and former works of God, for the supporting of his faith, to the obtaining of those good things, and works of mercy, which he was now praying for. We shall look on them as they lie in our way.

Verse 3. *God came from Teman, the Holy One from mount Paran, Selah: his glory covered the heavens, the earth was full of his praise.*

^o *Teman* was a city of the *Edomites*, whose land the people of *Israel* compassed in the wilderness, when they were stung with fiery serpents, and healed with looking on a brazen serpent, set up to be a type of Christ. *Teman* is put for the whole land of *Edom*; and the prophet makes mention of it, for the great deliverance and mercy granted there to the people, when they were almost consumed: that's God's coming from *Teman*. See *Num. xxi. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9*. When they were destroyed by fiery serpents, he heals them by a type of Christ, giving them corporal, and raising them to a faith of spiritual salvation.

^p *Paran*, the next place mentioned, was a mountain in the land of *Ismael*, near which *Moses* repeated the law; and from thence God carried the people immediately to *Canaan*: another eminent act of mercy.

Unto these he addeth the word *Selah*: as it is a song, a note of elevation in singing: as it respects the matter, not the form, a note of admiration and special obser-

^a Bonum agonem subituri essis, in quo agonizantes Deus vultus est: Christarchos Spiritus Sanctus, corona aternitatis brachium, Epithetes Jesus Christus, Tertul. ad Mar.

^o Gen. xxxvi. 15. Jer. xlix. 7. Obad. 9.

^p Deut. i.

vation: *Selah*, consider them well, for they were great works indeed. Special mercies must have special observation.

Now by reason of these actions, the prophet affirms that the glory of God covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. Lofty expressions of the advancement of God's glory, and the fulness of his praise amongst his people of the earth, which attended that merciful deliverance, and gracious assistance. Nothing is higher or greater than that which covers heaven, and fills earth. God's ¹ glory is exceedingly exalted, and his praise increased every where, by acts of favour and kindness to his people.

That which I shall chuse from amongst many others that present themselves, a little to insist upon, is that

VII. *Observation*, Former mercies, with their times and places, are to be had in thankful remembrance unto them who wait for future blessings.

Faith is to this end separated by them. *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord, awake as in the ancient days, as in the generations of old: art not thou it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art not thou it that dried the sea, the waters of the great deep, that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?* Isa. li. 9, 10. The breaking of *Rahab*, that is *Egypt*, so called here, and *Psal.* lxxxvii. 4. lxxxix. 11. for her *great strength*, which the word signifies; and the wounding of the dragon, that great and crooked afflictor, *Pharaoh*, is remembred, and urged, for a motive to a new needed deliverance. So *Psal.* lxxiv. 13, 14. *Thou brakest the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people in the wilderness.* *Leviathan*, the same dragon, oppressing, persecuting *Pharaoh*, thou brakest his heads, his counsels, armies, power, and gavest him for meat, that the people for forty years together might be fed, sustained, and nourished with that wonderful mercy. *Out of the eater came forth meat, out of the strong came forth sweetness.*

In this reciprocation God walketh with his people. Of free grace he bestoweth mercies and blessings on them: by grace works the returns of remembrance and thankfulness unto himself for them: then showers that down again in new mercies. The countries which send up no vapours, receive down no showers. Remembrance, with thankfulness of former mercies, is the matter, as it were, which by God's goodness is condensed into following blessings. For

1. Mercies have their proper end, when thankfully remembred. What more powerful motive to the obtaining of new, than to hold out, that the old were not abused? We are encouraged to cast seed again into that ground, whose last crop witnesseth that it was not altogether barren. That sad spot of good *Hezekiah*, that he rendred not again according to the benefit done unto him, is set down as the opening a door of wrath against himself, *Judah*, and *Jerusalem*, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. On the other side, suitable returns are a door of hope for farther mercies.

2. The remembrance of them strengthens faith, and keeps our hands from hanging down in the time of waiting for blessings. When faith is supported, the promise is engaged, and a mercy at any time more than half obtained. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for*, Heb. xi. 1. God (saith the Apostle) *hath delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver.* Now what conclusion makes he of this experience? *in whom we trust, that he will yet deliver us*, 2 Cor. i. 10. It was a particular mercy with its circumstances, as you may see *ver.* 9. which he made the bottom of his dependance. In the favours of men we cannot do so: they may be weary of helping, or be drawn dry, and grow helpless. Ponds may be exhausted, but the ocean never. The infinite fountains of the deity cannot be sunk one hair's breadth by everlasting flowing blessings. Now circumstances of actions, time, place, and the like, oftentimes take deep impressions: mercies should be remembred with them. So doth the Apostle again, 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18. *He did deliver me from the mouth of the lion: Nero*, that lion-like tyrant. And what then? *he will deliver me from every evil work.* *David* esteemed it very good logick, to argue from the victory God gave him *over the lion and the bear*, to a confidence of victory over *Goliath*, 1 Sam. xvii. 37.

¹ Gloria est frequens de aliquo fama cum laude, Cic. lib. 2. de inv. Consentiens laus bonorum, incorrupta vox bene judicantium de eccellente virtute, Idem Tuscul. lib. 3.

Use. The use of this we are led unto, *Isa.* xliii. 16, 17, 18. *Thus saith the Lord, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters: which bringeth forth the chariot and the horse, the army and the power: they shall lie down together, they shall not rise, they are extinct, they are quenched as tow. Remember ye not the former things, nor consider the things of old.* Let former mercies be an anchor of hope in time of present distresses. Where is the God of *Marstone Moor*, and the God of *Naseby*? is an acceptable expostulation in a gloomy day. O what a catalogue of mercies hath this nation to plead by in a time of trouble? God came from *Naseby*, and the Holy One from the *West*, *Selah: his glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.* He went forth in the *North*, and in the *East* he did not withhold his hand. I hope the poor town wherein I live, is more enriched with a store mercy of a few months, than with a full trade of many years. *The snares of death compassed us, and the floods of ungodly men made us afraid, Psal.* xviii. 4. *but the Lord thundred from heaven, the highest gave his voice, hail-stones and coals of fire: yea, he sent out his arrows and scattered them, and he shot out lightning and discomfited them: he sent from above, he took us, he drew us out of many waters, he delivered us from our strong enemy, and from them which hated us, for they were too strong for us, ver.* 13, 14, 16, 17. How may we say with the same *Psalmist* in any other distress, *O my God, my soul is cast down within me, therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Misfar, Psal.* xlii. 6. *Where is the God of Elijah, who divides anew the waters of Jordan, 2 Kings* ii. 14?

The following verses set forth the glory and power of God, in the accomplishment of that great work of bringing his people into the promised land, with those mighty things he performed in the wilderness.

Verse 4. If I mistake not, sets out his glorious appearance on *Mount Sinai*: of which the prophet affirms two things:

1. That *his brightness was as the light.*
2. That *he had horns coming out of his hand, and there was the hiding of his power.*

1. For the first. Is it not that brightness which appeared, when the mountain burnt with fire to the midst of heaven, *Deut.* iv. 11. a glorious fire in the midst of clouds and thick darkness? The like description you have of God's presence, *Psal.* xviii. 11, 12. *He made darkness his secret place, and brightness was before him:* as the light, the sun, the fountain and cause of it, called *light*, *Job* xxxi. 26. Now this glorious appearance holds out the kingly power and majesty of God in governing the world, which appeareth but unto few. *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, clouds and darkness are round about him, a fire goeth before him, his lightnings enlightened the world, Psal.* xcvi. 1, 2, 3.

2. *He had horns coming out of his hand.* So the words most properly, tho' by some, otherwise rendred. That horns in Scripture are taken for strength and power, needs no proving. The mighty power of God, which he made appear to his people, in that glorious representation of his majesty on mount *Sinai*, is by this phrase expressed. *There his chariots were seen to be twenty thousands, even many thousands of angels, and the Lord among them in that holy place, Psal.* lxxviii. 19. There they perceived that *he had horns in his hand*; an almighty power do do what he pleased. Whence it is added: *And there was the hiding of his power.* Though the appearance of it was very great and glorious, yet it was but small to the everlasting hidden depths of his omnipotency. The most glorious appearance of God comes infinitely short of his own eternal majesty as he is in himself: it is but a discovery, that there is the hiding of infinite perfection; or, there his power appeared to us, which was hidden from the rest of the world.

VIII. *Observation.* When God is doing great things, he gives glorious manifestations of his excellencies to his secret ones.

The appearance on *Sinai* goes before his passage into *Canaan*. *Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets,*

* No place in the county so threatned: no place in the county so preserved: small undertakings there blessed: great opposition blasted. *Non nobis; Domine, non nobis.*

[†] *Deut.* xxxiii. 17. *Psal.* lxxv. 10. *Zech.* i. 18.

Amos iii. 7. When he is to send *Moses* for the deliverance of his people, he appears to him in a burning, unconsumed bush, *Exod.* iii. 2. a sign manifesting the presence of his power, to preserve his Church unconsumed in the midst of burning, fiery afflictions. Unto this very end were all the visions, that are recorded in the Scripture, all of them accommodated to the things which God was presently doing. And this he doth:

1. That they may thereby be prepared to follow him, and serve him in the great works he hath for them to do. Great works are not to be done without great encouragements. If God appears not in light, who can expect he should appear in operation? He that is called to serve providence in high things, without some especial discovery of God, works in the dark¹, and knows not whither he goes, nor what he doth. Such an one travels in the wilderness without a directing cloud. Clear shining from God must be at the bottom of deep labouring with God. What is the reason that so many in our days set their hands to the plow, and look back again? begin to serve providence in great things, but cannot finish? give over in the heat of the day? They never had any such revelation of the mind of God upon their spirits, such a discovery of his excellencies, as might serve for a bottom of such undertakings. Men must know that if God hath not appeared to them in brightness, and shewed them *the horns in his hand*, hid from others, tho' they think highly of themselves, they'll deny God twice and thrice, before the close of the work of this age. If you have no great discoveries, you will wax vain in great undertakings. New workings on old bottoms, are like new wine in old bottles, both are spoiled and lost. The day is the time of work, and that because of the light thereof: those who have not light may be spared to go to bed.

2. That they may be the better enabled to give him glory, when they shall see the sweet harmony that is between his manifestations and his operations: when they can say with the Psalmist, *as we have heard, so have we seen*, *Psal.* xlviii. 8. As he revealeth himself, so he worketh. When his power and mercy answer his appearance in the bush, it is a foundation to a prayer: *The good will of him that dwelt in the bush, bless thee*. When a soul shall find God calling him forth to employments, perhaps great and high, yet every way suiting that light and gracious discovery which he hath given of himself, one thing answering another, it sets him in a frame of honouring God aright.

This might be of rich consideration could we attend it. For

Use 1. Hence, as I said before, is apostasy from God's work. He appears not unto men, how can they go upon his employment? Men that have no vision of God, are in the dark, and know not what to do. I speak not of visions beyond the word; but answers of prayers, gracious applications of providences, with wise considerations of times and seasons. Some drop off every day, some hang by the eyelids, and know not what to do: the light of God is not sent forth to lead and guide them, *Psal* xliii. 3. Wonder not at the strange backslidings of our days, many acted upon by engagements, and for want of light, know not to the last what they were a doing.

Use 2. Hence also is the suiting of great light, and great work, in our days. Let new light be derided whilst men please, he will never serve the will of God in this generation, who sees not beyond the line of foregoing ages.

Use 3. And this thirdly may put all those, whom God is pleased to employ in his service, upon a diligent enquiry into his mind. Can a servant do his master's work, without knowing his pleasure? We live for the most part from hand to mouth, and do what comes next: few are acquainted with the designs of God.

The going forth of the Lord with his people towards their rest, with reference to his harbingers, is described *ver.* 5.

Verse 5. *Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet.*

Before him, at his face. *The pestilence*: this is² often reckoned amongst the weapons wherewith God fighteth with any people to consume them; and as speed-

¹ John xii. 35. Rev. xvi. 10.

² Exod. ix. 15. Lev. xxvi. 25. 2 Sam. xxiv. 13. Ezek. xiv. 19. Mat. xxiv. 7.

ing an instrument of destruction it is, as any the Lord ever used towards the children of men. *At his feet went forth burning coals*: a redoubling say some of the same stroke; *burning coals*, for burning diseases. When one blow will not do the work appointed, God redoubles the stroke of his hand: Lev. xxvi. 22, 23, 24, 25. Or *burning coals*, dreadful judgments, mortal weapons; as fire and flames are often taken in other descriptions of God's dealing with his enemies, *Psal.* xi. 6. xviii. 8. Prevailing fire is the most dreadful means of destruction, *Heb.* xii. 29. *Isa.* xxxiii. 14. In *Exod.* xxiii. 28. God threatneth to send the hornet upon the *Canaanites*, before the children of *Israel*; some stinging judgments, either on their consciences, or bodies, or both: something of the same kind is doubtless here held out. He sent plagues and diseases among them to weaken and consume them, before his peoples entrance. His presence was with *Israel*, and the pestilence consuming the *Canaanites* before their entrance is said to be *פניו* at his faces, or appearances, before him, before the entrance of the presence of his holiness. And the following judgments, that quite devoured them, were *the coals going out at his feet*, which he sent abroad when he entered their land with his own inheritance, to cast out those *male fidei possessores*. Sickneses, diseases, and all sorts of judgments are wholly at God's disposal. *Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, yet man is born to trouble, as the sons of the burning coal lift up in flying*, Job v. 6, 7. When God intends the total destruction of a people, he commonly weakens them by some previous judgments. Let the truth of this be found upon them that hate us, and the interpretation thereof be to the enemies of this nation: but the Lord knows, all our hearts may well tremble at what will be the issue of the visitations of the last year.

IX. *Observation*. God never wants instruments to execute his anger, and ruin his enemies.

His treasury of judgments can never be exhausted. If *Israel* be too weak for the *Amorites*, he will call in the pestilence and burning diseases to their assistance. What creature hath not this mighty God used against his enemies? An *angel* destroys *Sennacherib's* host, *Isa.* xxxvii. 36. and smites *Herod* with worms, *Acts* xii. 23. Heaven above sends down a hell of fire and brimstone on *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, Gen. xix. 24. The stars in their courses fought against *Sisera*, Judg. v. 20. *Devils* do his will herein: he sent *evil angels* among the *Egyptians*, *Psal.* lxxviii. 49. Fire consumes persecuting *Abaziah's* companies, 2 *Kings* i. 10, 11. The water drowns *Pharaoh* and his chariots, *Exod.* xiv. 28. Earth swallows up *Korah*, with his fellow rebels, *Numb.* xvi. 32. Bears rend the children that mocked *Elisha*, 2 *Kings* ii. 24. Lions destroy the strange nations in *Samaria*, 2 *Kings* xvii. 25. Frogs, lice, boils, hail, rain, thunder, lightning, destroy the land of *Egypt*, *Exod.* viii. 9, 10. Locusts are his mighty army to punish *Israel*, Joel ii. 25. Hailstones destroy the *Canaanites*, Josh. x. 11. Stones of the wall slay the *Syrians*, 1 *Kings* xx. 30. Pestilence and burning diseases are his ordinary messengers. In a word, all creatures serve his providence, and wait his commands for the execution of his righteous judgments. Neither the beasts of the field, nor the stones of the earth, will be any longer quiet than he causeth them to hold a league with the sons of men.

Use 1. To teach us all to tremble before this mighty God. Who can stand before him, *qui tot imperat legionibus*? If he will strike, he wants no weapons; if he will fight, he wants no armies. All things serve his will. He saith to one, come, and it cometh; to another, go, and it goeth; to a third, do this, and it doth it. He can make use of ourselves, our friends, our enemies, heaven, earth, fire, water, any thing, for what end he pleaseth. There is no standing before his armies, for they are all things, and himself to make them effectual. There is no flying from his armies, for they are every where, and himself with them. Who would not fear this king of nations? He that contends with him shall find it, *As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house and leaned upon a wall, and a serpent bit him*, Amos v. 18, 19. No flying, no hiding, no contending. Worms kill *Herod*; a flie choak'd *Adrian*, &c.

Use 2. To be a bottom of confidence and dependance in an evil day. He that hath God on his side, hath also all things that are seen, and that are not seen. The mountain is full of fiery chariots for *Elisha's* defence, when outwardly there was no appearance, 2 *Kings* vi. 17. All things wait their Master's beck, to do him service,

as for the destruction of enemies, so for the deliverance of his. What tho' we had no army in the time of war? God hath millions, many thousands of angels, *Psal.* lxxviii. 17. one whereof can destroy so many thousands of men in a night. *Isa.* xxxvii. 36. He can *choose* (when few others will appear with him against the mighty, as in our late troubles) *foolish things to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the strong.* *Senacherib's* angel is yet alive, and the destroyer of *Sodom* is not dead: and all those things are at our command, if their help may be for our good: *Judah ruleth with God*, *Hos.* xi. 12. hath a rule by faithful supplications over all those mighty hosts. Make God our friend, and we are not only of the best, but also the strongest side. You that would be on the safest side, be sure to choose that which God is on. Had not this mighty all-commanding God been with us, where had we been in the late tumults? so many thousands in *Kent*, so many in *Wales*, so many in the *North*, so many in *Essex*, shall they not speed? shall they not divide the prey? Is not the day of those factious *Independents* come? was the language of our very neighbours. The snare is broken, and we are delivered.

The Lord having sent messengers before him into *Canaan*, stands himself as it were upon the borders, and takes a view of the land.

Verse 6. *He stood and measured the earth, he beheld and drove asunder the nations, and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.*

Two things are here considerable,

1. The Lord's exact foreview of the promised land: *He stood and measured the earth, and beheld the nations.*

2. His operation at that time: *He drove asunder the nations, &c.*

1. He stood and measured. The prophet here representeth the Lord on the frontier of *Canaan*, as one taking view of a piece of land, and exactly measuring it out, as intending it for his own, weighing and considering the bounds and limits of it, to see if it will answer the end for which he purposeth it. God's exact notice and knowledge of his peoples possession is in those words held out. He views where the lines of every tribe shall run. Nothing happens or is made out to any of God's people, without his own careful, providential predisposition. He views the circuit of the whole, where, and how divided, and separated from the dwellings of the unclean, and habitations of the uncircumcised. Fixed bounds, measured limits of habitation is a necessary ingredient to the making up of a national Church.

2. What he did: which is two ways expressed, (1.) In reference to the inhabitants, (2.) To the land itself.

(1.) For the inhabitants: He drove them asunder, *וַיִּפְרֹק* and he made to leap out of their old chancels. Those nations knit and linked together amongst themselves, by leagues and civil society, he separated, disturbed, divided in councils and arms (as in the case of the *Gibeonites* *) persecuted by the sword, that they suddenly leaped out of their habitations, the residue wandering as no people. God's justly nation-disturbing purposes are the bottom of their deserved ruin.

(2.) For the land: *The everlasting mountains, &c.* those strong, firm, lasting mountains of *Canaan*, not like the mountains of sand in the desert, where the people were, but to continue firm to the world's end, as both the words here used, *וְעַד* and *וְעַד* *perpetuity*, and *everlasting*, do in the Scripture frequently signify. Now these are said to be scattered and to bow, because of the destruction of the inhabitants of those lasting hills, being many of them high and mighty ones †, like perpetual mountains; they being given in possession to the sons of *Israel*, even *the chief things of the ancient mountains, and the precious things of the lasting hills*, *Deut.* xxxiii. 15.

X. *Observation.* God takes an exact foreview of his peoples portion and inheritance.

Like a careful father, he knows beforehand what he intends to bestow upon them. He views it, measures it, prepares it to the utmost bounds. They shall not have a hair's breadth which he hath not allotted them, nor want the least jot of their designed portion.

* *Josh.* ix. 3.

† *Numb.* xiii. 33.

Use. Learn to be contented with your lot. He is wise also who took a view of it, and measured it, and found it just commensurate to your good: had he known that a foot's breadth more had been needful, you should have had it. Had he seen it good, you had had no thorns in your lands, no afflictions in your lives. O how careful, how solicitous are many of God's people! how full of desires! Oh, that it were with me thus or thus! Possess your souls in patience: as you cannot add to, no more shall any take from your proportion. He took the measure of your wants, and his own supplies long since. That which he hath measured out, he will cut off for you. He knows how to suit all his children.

XI. *Observation.* It is dangerous incroaching for any of the sons of men upon God's peoples portion, lot, privileges, or inheritance.

God hath measured it out for them, and he will look that they enjoy it. ¹ Shall men remove his bounds, and landmarks, and be free? will it be safe trespassing upon the lands of the Almighty? will it be easy and cheap? will he not plead his action with power? especially seeing he hath given them their portion? If he hath given *Seir* to *Edom*, what doth he vexing and wasting *Jacob*? Shall they not possess what the Lord their God gives them to possess? *Jud.* xi. 24. He hath cautioned all the world, Kings and others in this kind: *Touch not mine anointed, do my prophets no harm*, *Psal.* cv. 14, 15. Touch them not, nor any thing that is theirs: harm them not in any thing I bestow on them. They have nothing but what their Father gives them, and Christ hath bought for them. Will a tender father, think you, contentedly look on, and see a slave snatch away his childrens bread? If a man hath engaged himself to give a jewel to a dear friend, will he take it patiently to have an enemy come and snatch it away before his face? God is engaged to his people for all their enjoyments, and will he quietly suffer himself to be robbed, and his people spoiled? Shall others dwell quietly in the land, which he hath measured for his own?

Use 1. See whence the great destructions of people and nations in these latter ages have come. Is it not for touching these forbidden things? The holy vessels of the temple at *Hierusalem*, ruined *Babylon*. Is not the wasting of the western nations at this day from hence, that they have served the whore to deck herself with the spoils of the spouse? helped to trim her with the portion of God's people, taking away their liberties, ordinances, privileges, lives, to lay at her feet? Doubtless God is pleading with all these kingdoms for their incroaching. They who will not let him be at peace with his, shall have little quiet with their own. The eagle that stole a coal from the altar, fired her nest. I know how this hath been abused to countenance the holding of *Babylonish* wedges. God will preserve to his people his own allowance, not *Rome's* supplyment. This nation hath yet itching fingers, and a hankering mind after the inheritance of God's people. Let them take heed, he hath knocked off their hands an hundred times, and sent them away with bloody fingers. O that we were wise, that we be not quite consumed! Of you I hope better things, and such as accompany salvation, yet give me leave to cautionate you a little.

(1.) As to privileges and liberties of this life. Their liberties and estates are not as other mens, but more exactly measured for their good, and sanctified to them in the blood of Christ. If in these things God hath called you to the defence and protection of his, he will expect a real account. You had better give away a kingdom that belongs to others, than the least of that which God hath made for his saints. Think not any thing small, which God accounts worthy to bestow on his. If he hath meted out liberty for them, and you give them slavery, you will have a sad reckoning.

(2.) In point of ordinances, and Christ purchased privileges. ² Here 'tis dangerous encroaching indeed. God exactly measured *Canaan* because it was to be the seat of a national Church. If you love your lives, if you love your souls, be tender in this point. Here if you meddle with that which belongs not unto you, were you Kings, all your glory would be laid in the dust, *2 Chron.* xxvi. 18. Wo to them,

¹ Vid. Tertul. ad Scapulam, de persecutione.

² Nero primus in Christianos ferocuit, tali dedicatore damnationis nostra etiam gloriamur, qui enim scit illum, intelligere potest, non nisi aliquod bonum grande à Nerone damnatum, Tertul. Apol.

who cut short the saints of God in the least jot, of what he hath allotted to them in spirituals. Is it for any of you, O ye sons of men, to measure out God's children's portion, long since bequeathed them by Christ? Let them alone with what is given them. If God call *Israel* out of *Egypt* to serve him, shall *Pharaoh* assign who, and how they shall go, first men only, then all without their cattle? Nay, says *Moses*, we will go as God calls, *Exod.* x. 26.

Was not one main end of the late tumults to rob God's people of their privileges, to bring them again under the yoke of superstition? What God brake in war, do not think he will prosper in peace. If you desire to thrive, do not the same, nor any thing like it. Take they any thing of yours, that belongs to *Cesar*, the civil magistrate, restrain them, keep them within bounds. But if they take only what Christ hath given them, O touch them not, harm them not. The heap is provided for them, let them take for themselves. Think it not strange that every one should gather his own manna. The Lord forbid that I should oversee the magistrates of *England* taking away liberties, privileges, ordinances, or ways of worship, from them, to whom the Almighty hath made a free grant of them.

(3.) If in taking what God hath measured out for them, they should not all comply with you, in the manner and measure of what they take, do them no harm, impoverish not their families, banish them not, slay them not. ^a Alas! your judgments, were you Kings, and Emperors, is not a rule to them. They must be tried by their own faith. Are their souls think you more precious to you than themselves? You say they take amiss: they say no: ^b and appeal to the word. Should you now smite them? Speak blood, is that the way of Jesus Christ? Should it be as you affirm, you would be puzzled for your warrant. To run when you are not sent, surely in this case is not safe. But what if it should prove in the close, that they have followed divine directions? Do you not then fight against God, wound Jesus Christ, and prosecute him as an evil doer? I know the usual colours, the common pleas, that are used for the instigation of authority to the contrary. They are the very same, and no other, that have slain the saints of God this twelve hundred years. Arguments for persecution are died in the blood of Christians for a long season, ever since the dragon gave his power to the false prophet, they have all died as hereticks and schismatics. Suppose you saw in one view all the blood of the witnesses of Christ, which hath been let out of their veins, by vain pretences; that you heard in one noise the doleful cry of all pastorless Churches, dying martyrs, harbourless children of parents inheriting the promise, wilderness-wandering saints, dungeoned believers, wrested out by pretended zeal to peace and truth; and perhaps it may make your spirits tender as to this point.

Use 2. See the warrantableness of our contests for God's peoples rights. It was *Jephtha's* only argument against the encroaching *Ammonites*, *Judg.* xi. By God's assistance they would possess what the Lord their God should give them. If a grant from heaven will not make a firm title, I know not what will. Being called by lawful authority, certainly there is not a more glorious employment, than to serve the Lord in helping to uphold the portion he hath given his people. If your hearts be upright, and it is the liberties, the privileges of God's saints, conveyed from the Father, purchased by Christ, you contend for, go on and prosper, the Lord is with you.

XII. Observation. The works and labours of God's people are transacted for them in heaven, before they once undertake them.

The *Israelites* were now going to *Canaan*, God doth their work for them beforehand, they did but go up and take possession. *Joshua* and *Caleb* tell the people, not only that their enemies defence was departed from them, but that they were but bread for them, *Numb.* xiv. 9. not corn that might be prepared, but bread, ground, made up, baked, ready to eat. Their work was done in heaven. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, *Acts.* xv. 18. All that is done here below, is but the writing of a visible copy for the sons of men to read, out of the eternal lines of his own purpose.

^a Nova & inaudita est ista predicatio, que verberibus exigit fidem, *Greg. Epist.* 52.

^b Magistrum neminem habemus nisi solum Deum; hic ante te est, nec abscondi potest, sed cui nihil facere possis.

Use. Up and be doing, you that are about the work of the Lord. Your enemies are bread ready to be eaten, and yield you refreshment. Do you think if our armies had not walked in a trodden path, they could have made such journies as they have done of late? Had not God marched before them, and traced out their way from *Kent* to *Essex*, from *Wales* to the *North*, their carcasses had long e're this been cast into the field. Their work was done in heaven before they begun it. God was gone over the mulberry trees, 2 *Sam.* v. 24. The work might have been done by children, tho' he was pleased to employ such worthy instruments. They see I doubt not their own nothingness in his all-sufficiency. Go on then, but with this caution, search by all ways and means to find the footsteps of the mighty God going before you.

The trembling condition of the opposing nations round about, when God appeared so gloriously for his people, is held out *ver.* 7.

Verse 7. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

You have here three things considerable.

1. The mention of two nations, enemies of the Church: *Cushan* and *Midian*.

2. The state and condition of those nations: *The tents of the one in affliction, and the curtains of the other in trembling.*

3. The view the prophet had of this, I saw it saith he: *I saw &c.*

1. For the first, these two nations, *Cushan* and *Midian*, were the neighbouring people to the *Israelites*, being in the wilderness when God did such great things for them.

(1.) *Cushan*, that is, the tent-dwelling *Arabians* on the south side towards *Ethiopia*, being, as the *Ethiopians*, of the posterity of *Cush* (thence called *Cushan*) the eldest son of scoffing *Ham*, *Gen.* x. 6. enemies and opposers of the Church (doubtless) all the way down from their profane ancestors. These now beheld the *Israelites* going to root out their allies, and kindred, the *Amorites* of *Canaan*, the posterity of *Canaan*, the younger brother of their progenitor *Cush*, *Gen.* x. 6.

(2.) *Midian* was a people inhabiting on the east side *Jordan*, on the borders of *Moab*, so called from their forefather *Midian*, the son of *Abraham* by *Keturah*, *Gen.* xxv. 3, 4. These obtained a temporal blessing for a season, from the love born to their faithful progenitor. In the days of *Jacob* they were great merchants, *Gen.* xxxvii. 28. At this time, in less than four hundred years, they were so multiply'd, that they had five Kings of their nation, *Numb.* xxxi. 1. Some knowledge of the true God was retained, as it should seem, until now amongst some of them, being received by tradition from their fathers. *Moses's* father in law was a priest of this country, *Exod.* ii. 15, 16. not altogether unacquainted with *Jehovah*, *Exod.* xviii. and was himself, or his son, persuaded to take up his portion in *Canaan*, *Num.* x. 29, 30. But for the generality of the nation, being not heirs of the promise, they were fallen off to superstition and idolatry. Exceeding enemies they were to the people in the wilderness, vexing them with their wiles, and provoking them to abominations, that the Lord might consume them, *Numb.* xxv. 17. None so vile enemies to the Church as superstitious apostates. These two nations then set out all manner of opposers: gross idolaters, as *Cushan*; and superstitious, envious apostates, as *Midian*.

2. Their state and condition severally.

(1.) *The tents of Cushan were in affliction: the tents*, the *Arabian Ethiopians* of *Cush*, dwelling in tents: the habitation for the inhabitant, by an *hypallage*. They were *in affliction, under vanity, under iniquity, the place of vanity*, so variously are the words rendred: *תחת חסד* under affliction, vanity, or iniquity. Sin and the punishment of it are frequently in the Scripture of the same name: so near is the relation. *חסד* is properly and most usually iniquity, but that it is here taken for the consequent of it, a consuming, perplexed, vexed condition can be no doubt. The *Cushanites* then were *in affliction*, full of anguish, fear, dread, vexation to see what would be the issue of those great and mighty things, which God was doing in their borders for his people: ^d afflicted with *Israel's* happiness and their own fears, as is the condition of all wicked oppressors.

^c 2 Kings xix. 9. Jer. xiii. 23. *Joseph. Antiq.* l. vii. xxxvii. 9.

^d *Tutus invidus habet poena justa tortores, quantos invidiosus habuerit laudatores.* *Prosp. vita contempt.*

(2.) *The curtains of the land of Midian*, for the *Midianites* dwelling in curtained tabernacles, by the same figure as before. *They trembled*: וַיִּגְדָּו, *moved themselves, were moved*, that is, *shaken with fear and trembling*, as tho' they were ready to run from the appearance of the mighty God with his people. The story of it you have in the book of *Numbers**, as it was prophetically foretold by *Moses* concerning other nations, *Exod. xv. 14, 15, 16. The people shall hear and be afraid, sorrow shall take hold of the inhabitants of Palestina: Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed, the mighty men of Moab, &c.* God filled those nations with anguish, sorrow, and amazement, at the protection he granted his people.

3. The prophet's view of all this: *I saw it, or I see it.* Tho' it were eight hundred and seventy years before, supposing him to prophesy about the end of *Josiah*, or beginning of *Jekoiakim*, yet taking it under the consideration of faith he makes it present to his view.

Faith looketh backwards and forwards, to what God hath done, and to what he hath promised to do. *Abraham* saw the day of Christ, so many ages after, because he found it by faith in the promise. *Habakkuk* saw the terrors of *Cushan* and *Midian* so many ages before, because faith found it recorded among the works of God to support itself in seeking the like mercies to be renewed. So that this is the sum of this *verse*: O Lord, faith makes it evident, and presents it before my view, how in former days, when thou wast doing great things for thy people, thou filledst all thine and their enemies with fear, vexation, trembling, and astonishment.

XIII. *Observation.* Faith gives a present subsistence to forepast works as recorded, and future mercies as promised, to support the soul in an evil day.

I have made the doctrine by analogy look both ways, though the words of the text look but one.

The Apostle tells us, that *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1.

1. *Of things hoped for.* It looks forward to the promises, and so gives the substance of them in present possession, confirming our minds and hearts, that they may have a subsistence as it were within us, tho' not actually made out unto us.

2. *It is the evidence of things not seen.* It extends itself not only to things promised, but taking for its object the whole word of God, it makes evident and present things that are past also. The faith commended *ver. 3.* is of things long since done, even the *making of the things that are seen, of the things that do not appear.* *Abraham saw my day, saith our Saviour*, John viii. 56. He saw it, as *Habakkuk* saw the tents of *Cushan* in affliction: faith made it present to him: all the ages between him and his promised seed were as nothing to his keen-sighted faith. Hence the Apostle puts the mercies of the promise all in one form and rank as already wrought, tho' some of them were enjoyed, and some of them in this life cannot be. *Rom. viii. 30. Whom he hath justified, them he hath glorified*: he hath done it for them already, because he hath made them believe it, and that gives it a present subsistence in their spirits. And for forepast works, they are still mentioned by the saints, as if they had been done in their days, before their eyes. *Elisha* calls up to remembrance a former miracle, to the effecting the like, *2 Kings* ii. 14.

There be three things in past or future mercies which faith makes present to the soul, giving in the subsistence of them, (1.) their love, (2.) their consolation, (3.) their use and benefit.

(1.) The love of them. The love that was in former works, and the love that is in promised mercies, that faith draws out, and really makes ours. The love of every recorded deliverance is given to us by faith. It looks into the goodwill, the free grace, the loving kindness of God, in every work that ever he did for his, and cries, *Yet this is mine*: this is the kernel of that blessing, and this is mine: for the same goodwill, the same kindness he hath towards me also. Were the same outward actings needful, I should have them also. The free love of every mercy is faith's proper object. It makes all *Joshua's* great victories present to every one of us. The promise that had the love and grace in it, which run through them all, is given him, *Josh. i. 5. I will be with thee, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.* Now the

* Numb. xxv. chap. xxvii, and xxxi.

Apostle tells us, that the truth and love of this promise is ours, *Heb. xiii. 3.* Faith may, doth assure itself, that what goodwill soever was in all the great mercies which *Joshua* received upon that promise, is all ours. All the goodwill and choice love of, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, is mine and thine, if we are believers. He that hath this present, hath all *Joshua's* victories present. The very glory of the saints in heaven is ours in the love of it. We enjoy that love which gave them glory, and will crown us also in due time.

(2.) In their comforts and refreshments. *Thou gavest Leviathan to be meat to the people in the wilderness*, *Psal. xiv.* They fed their souls full of the sweetness of that mercy, the destruction of their oppressing tyrant: we chew the cud upon the blessings of former ages. Who hath not with joy, delight, and raised affections, gone over the old preservations of the Church in former years? How does *David* run them over with admiration, closing every stop with, *His mercy endureth for ever?* *Psal. cxxxvi.* And for things to come, as yet in the promise only, whether general to the whole Church, as the calling of the *Jews*, the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles, the breaking out of light, beauty, and glory upon the Churches and saints, the confusion of nations, not subjecting themselves to the standard of the Gospel, &c. or in particular, farther assurance of love than at present enjoyed, nearer communion with Father and Son, being with Christ, freed from misery and corruption, dwelling with God for ever; how does faith act over these, and the like things in the heart, leaving a savour and relish of their sweetness continually upon the soul? O how sweet are the things of the world to come unto poor believers! Christ leads the soul by faith, not only into the chambers of present enjoyed loves, but also into the foreprepared everlasting mansions in his Father's house. Thus it gives poor mortal creatures a sweet relish of eternal joys: brings heaven into a dungeon, glory into a prison, a crown into a cottage, Christ into a slaughter-house. And this arises,

[1.] From the nature of faith. Though it do not make the thing believed to be, (the act cannot create its own object) yet applying it, it makes it the believer's. It is the bond of union between the soul and the thing promised, *He that believes in Christ*, by that believing receives Christ, *John i. 12.* he becomes his. It is a grace uniting its subject and object, the person believing, and the thing believed. There needs no ascending into heaven, or descending, the word of faith makes all things nigh, even within us, *Rom. x. 6, 7.* Some glasses will present things at a great distance very near: faith looking through the glass of the Gospel, makes the most remote mercies to be not only in a close distance, but in union. It is the subsistence of things hoped for, that which they have not in themselves, it gives them in the full assured minds of believers.

[2.] From the intendment of all mercies. They are for every believer. All things are theirs, *world, life, death, things present, things to come*, *1 Cor. ii. 22.* All promises being made to every believer, and all mercies being the fruit of these promises, they must all belong to every believer. Now if all these should be kept from us, at that distance wherein they fall in their accomplishment in respect of time, what would they avail us? God therefore hath appointed that they shall have a real, though not a natural presence and subsistence at all times, to all believers.

Use 1. See hence what use you make of past mercies, deliverances, blessings, with promised incomings; carry them about you by faith, that you may use them at need. *Where is the God of Elijah? Awake, awake, oh arm of the Lord, &c. I saw the tents of Cushan.* Take store mercies along with you in every trial. Use them, or they'll grow rusty, and not pass in heaven. Learn to eat *Leviathan* many years after his death. Forget not your pearls; scatter not away your treasure; be rich in a heap of mercies, faith will make you so. The love, the comfort, the benefit of all former and future blessings are yours, if you know how to use them: Oh, how have we lost our mercies in every hedge and ditch! Have none of us skill to lay up the last eminent deliverance against a rainy day?

Use 2. Learn how to make the poorest and most afflicted condition comfortable and full of joy. Store thy cottage, thy sick bed by faith, with all sorts of mercies: they are the richest furniture in the world. Gather up what is already cast out, and fetch the rest from heaven. Bring the first fruits of glory into thy bosom. See the *Jews* called, the residue of opposers subdued, the Gospel exalted, Christ enthroned, all thy sins pardoned, corruption conquered, glory enjoyed. Roll thyself

in those golden streams every day. Let faith fetch in new and old: ancient mercies for thy supportment, everlasting mercies for thy consolation. He that hath faith, hath all things.

XIV. *Observation.* God's dealing with his enemies in the season of his Church's deliverance is of especial consideration.

I saw the tents, &c. So did the Israelites behold the Egyptians dead on the shore, *Exod. xiv. 30, 31.* *The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge, Selah. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made on the earth,* *Psal. xlv. 6, 7, 8.* The enemies undertaking, *ver. 6.* God's protection to his people, *ver. 7.* A view of the adversaries' desolation, *ver. 8.* are all orderly held out.

The Lord tells Moses that he will harden the heart of Pharaoh, that he might shew his power, to this very end, that it might be considered, and told to one another, *Exod. x. 2, 3.* How many Psalms have we that are taken up in setting forth God's breaking, yoking, befooling, terrifying his adversaries at such a season? The remembrance of the slaughter of the firstborn of Egypt was an ingredient in the chiefest ordinance the ancient Church enjoyed, *Exod. xiv.* The reasons of this are,

1. Much of the greatness and intenseness of God's love to his own is seen in his enemies' ruin. *Isa. xliii. 3, 4.* *I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I loved thee; therefore I will give men for thee, and people for thy life.* When God gives such mighty kingdoms for a small handful, it appears they are precious to him. *Whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake,* *Isa. liv. 15.* When God will maintain a quarrel with all the world, swear that he will never have peace with Amaleck, until he be consumed, break nations, kings and kingdoms, stretch out his hand in judgment round about, and all to save, preserve, prosper, protect, a small handful; surely he hath endeared affections for them. In the days wherein we live, can we look, and see wise men befooled, mighty warriors vanquished, men of might become as children, their persons slain, and trodden down in the field, can we but cry, *Lord, what are we, and what is our house that thou shouldst do such things for us?* A serious view of what God hath done in this nation of late, what armies he hath destroyed, what strong holds demolished, what proud haughty spirits defeated, what consultations made vain, is enough to make us admire the riches of his love all our days. We may know what esteem a man sets upon a jewel, by the price he gives for it. Surely God values them for whom he hath given the honours, the parts, the politics, the lives of so many tall cedars, as of late he hath done. The loving kindness of God to his Church is seen, as in a glass, in the blood of their persecutors.

2. The manifestation of God's sovereignty, power, and justice, is as dear to him, as the manifestation of his mercy. The properties he lays out in destruction are equally glorious with those he lays out in preservation. In the proclamation of his glorious name he omits them not, *Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.* In these he triumpheth gloriously, when he hath overthrown the horse and his rider in the sea, *Exod. xv.*

Use. Let not our eyes in the late deliverance be always on the light side of the work, our own mercies: the dark side of terror and judgment is not without its glory. The folly that was in their counsels, the amazement that was in their armies, the trembling that accompanied all their undertakings, the tympanous products of all their endeavours, do all cry out, *Digitus Dei est hic.* Had not God shewed infinite wisdom, they had not been so abundantly foolish: had not he been infinite in power, the many thousands of enemies had not been so weak.

In the late engagement in this country, when God stirred us up, with some others in these parts, to make some opposition to the enemy gathering at Chelmsford, what were, think you, the workings of God's providences against them? How came it to pass that we were not swallowed up by them? For

1. They were desirous to ruin us: if we may judge their desires to answer their interest; or their expressions, with the language of their friends round about us, to answer their desires.

2. They

2. They were able to do it. They had from the beginning, and so all along, near as many thousands as we had hundreds, of them very many old experienced soldiers, with us not three men that had ever seen any fighting.

3. They were resolved to do it. Witness their own confessions, and frequent declarations of their purposes, whilst the business was in agitation.

4. They were provoked to it. For the first and only considerable opposition was made to them in this place: first, by hindring their assistance from *Colchester*, which how much they valued, witness the senseless letter they would have forced the committee to subscribe, to persuade us not to disturb their levies there: secondly, suppressing and discouraging all those affected to them and their designs in these parts of the county, restraining some, disarming others, awing all: thirdly, hastning the coming of the army, lest their friends should suffer: fourthly, encouraging their coming, by declaring that they had friends here: by which, and the like, they were abundantly provoked.

5. That they were also invited to it, though by persons somewhat inconsiderable, with promises of a full party of friends to assist them, which they might have had, and a rich booty from their enemies to support them, which they might have found, is too apparent.

Now being thus advantaged, thus encouraged, thus provoked, and resolved, why did they not attempt it, why did they not accomplish their desires? Is it not worth the while to consider how they were restrained? Was not much of God's wisdom seen in mixing a spirit of giddiness and error in the midst of them; that they knew not well how to determine, nor at all to execute their determinations? Was not his power seen in causing experienced soldiers as they were, with their multitudes, to be afraid of a poor handful of unskilful men, running together because they were afraid to abide in their houses? Was not his justice exalted, in keeping them only for the pit which they had digged for others? Doubtless the hand of God was lifted up. O that we could all learn righteousness, peculiarly amongst ourselves of this place! Is there nothing of God to be discerned, in the vexations, birthless consultations, and devices of our observers? Nothing of power in their restraint? Nothing of wisdom in the self-punishment of their anxious thoughts? Nothing of goodness, that after so long waiting for advantage, they begin themselves to think, that neither divination nor enchantment will prevail?

XV. *Observation*. The measuring out of God's peoples portion fills *Cushan* with affliction, and *Midian* with trembling.

Their eye is evil, because God is good. *Israel's* increase is *Pharaoh's* trouble, *Exod.* i. 10. When *Nehemiah* comes to build the walls of *Jerusalem*, it grieved the enemy exceedingly, *that one was come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel*, *Neh.* ii. 10. This is the season of that dispensation which you have mentioned, *Isa.* lxxv. 13, 14, 15. *Thus saith the Lord, behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry, behold my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall, &c.*

The reasons of this are taken, 1. from their envy, 2. from their carnal fear: the two principles whereby they are acted in reference to the saints of God.

1. Their envy. 8 They have a devouring envy at them, which at length shall shame them and consume them, *Isa.* xxvi. 11. They are of their father the Devil, and he (through envy) was a murderer from the beginning, *John* viii. 44. The portion God measureth out unto his people is in distinguishing mercies, differencing blessings; in such things as the world hath not, giveth not. Now this is that, which envy takes for its proper object. That others should have enjoyments above them, beyond them, this envious men cannot bear. God accepts *Abel*, not *Cain*; presently *Cain* is wroth and his countenance falls, *Gen.* iv. 8. *Jacob* gets the blessing, and this fills the heart of *Esau* with murderous revenge, *Gen.* xxvii. 41. Upon all God's appearances with the Apostles, how were the *Jews* cut to the heart, vexed, perplexed? God gives

¹ *Gen.* xx. 6. *Psal.* lxxvi. 10.

² *Quis facile potest quale sit hoc malum verbis exprimere, quo invidus odio hominis persequitur divinum munus in homine, Prof. vtr. cont. Invidia est tristitia de bono proximi, prout proprium malum estimatur & est diminutionem proprii boni, Aqu. 22. x. q. 36. A. 1. c.*

distinguishing mercies to his people, such protections, such deliverances: this *Cushan* and *Midian* cannot bear.

2. Their carnal fear. They have all of them that conclusion in their breasts, which *Haman's* wisemen and wife made to him, *Est.* vi. 13. If they begin to fall before the seed of the *Jews*, utter ruin will follow. When God begins to own his people, as them in the *Acts*, chap. v. 24. *they doubt whether this will grow*: their hearts tell them secretly they are usurpers of all they have: and when God owns any, they instantly fear lest for their sakes they should be called to account. When a distinction begins to be made, in ordinances, privileges, deliverances, protections, evidently given to some peculiar ones, they tremble within that they are set apart for no good. This picking and chusing of men by the Lord, *Psal.* iv. 3, they cannot bear with. Such mighty works attend the *Israelites*, what thinks *Midian* will be the end of this? It is true, their pride calls on them to act openly more of their malice, than their fear: but yet this lies at the bottom, like a boasting Atheist's nightly thoughts^h. The chief priests and pharisees having gotten the Apostles before them, what big words they use to countenance the business? Who gave you this power? *Acts* iv. 7. But when they are by themselves they cry, What shall we do? and whereunto will this grow? This lies at the bottom with many at this day: tho' they boast and lift up their mouths to heaven, their hearts do tremble as an aspen leaf.

Use. Learn not to be troubled at the great tumultuating, which is amongst many against the ways of God at this day. God is measuring out his childrens portion, giving them their bread in season, viewing for them the lot of their inheritance, Men of the world, profane *Cushanites*, superstitious, apostatical *Midianites*, will not, cannot be quiet. Vexed they are, envious and afraid, and will act according to those principles. *Cushanites* see religion owned, *Midianites* theirs disclaimed, and both are alike provoked. The Lord convert them, or rebuke them, or the one will have the armies, the other their wiles. Only judge not their hearts by the outward appearance always: they seem gallant to you, indeed they are frightened, galled, vexed. I have seen a galled horse under dressing, leap and curvet, as tho' it had been out of metal and spirit, when indeed it was pain and smart that made him do it. They pretend to despise us, when they envy us. They look like contemners, but are tremblers. Be not troubled at their outward appearance, they have inward anguish; they bite others, but are lashed themselves.

XVI. *Observation.* The season of the Church's deliverance being come, *Cushan* and *Midian* must wax vain and perish.

That there is such a season I told you before. When four hundred and thirty years are expired, *Egypt* must be destroyed, the *Amorites* rooted out, and all the nations round made to tremble. When seventy years of captivity expire, *Babylon* must be ruined, and the *Caldean* monarchy quite wasted, that the *Jews* may return. The Church being to be delivered, *Haman* must be hanged. This you have fully set out, *Rev.* vi. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. It is the fall of heathenish tyranny, by the prevailing of the Gospel, which you have there described. *Rome* and *Constantinople*, Pope and Turk, are preserved for a day and an hour wherein they shall fall and be no more. If the season of enjoying ordinances and privileges be come to this nation, that the tabernacle of God will be here amongst men; wo be to *Cushanites*, wo be to *Midianites*, open opposers, and secret apostates. They shall not be able to be quiet, nor to prevail; God will not let them rest, nor obtain their purposes. The story of *Haman* must be acted over again; their hearts shall be stirred up to their own ruin, *Rev.* xx. 8. This is the frame of perishing *Babylonians*, in the day of *Sion's* restoration. The reasons are,

1. Because at the deliverance of his people, God will plead with their enemies for their oppressions. *It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, the year of recompences for the controversy of Sion*, *Isa.* xxxiv. 8. It is the vengeance of the Lord and his temple that lights upon them in that day, *Jer.* l. 28. *The violence done to me and my flesh, be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitants of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Caldea shall Jerusalem say*, *Jer.* li. 35. In this day great *Babylon* must come into remembrance, *Rev.* xvi. 19, 20.

^h *Nolui dubitare.*

2. The discerning trial that shall, and doth come along with the Church's vindication, will cut off all superfluous false professors, so that they also shall perish, *Mal. iii. 2, 3.* Christ comes with a fan to send away the chaff in the wings of the wind. Have we not seen this end of many zealots?

3. The *Amorites* live in *Canaan*, and must be removed. Oppressors and hypocrites enjoy many rites of the Church, which must be taken from them. *Rome* and her adherents shall not have so much left, as the name or title, appearance or shew of a Church. The outward court, which they have trodden down and defiled, shall be quite left out in the measuring of the temple, *Rev. xi.*

Use. Bring this observation home to the first from this *verse*, and it will give you the use of it: proceed we to the next *verse*.

Verse 8. Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thy horses and thy chariots of salvation?

Was the Lord displeased, חרה *kindled*, did he burn? that is in wrath. Heat is a great ingredient in the commotion of anger in us, here alluded to, or because the effects of anger are so often compared to fire. *Against the rivers or floods?* Again: *Was thine anger?* אפך *thy nose or face*, or *thine anger*, אף signifies both. The face is the seat of anger's appearance: fury comes up into the face. *Was thine anger, thy troubling anger* (so the word) *against the sea?* the *Red sea*, through which thy people passed: *that thou didst ride upon thy horses, and thy chariots of salvation?* or, *thy chariots were salvation*, currus salutare, *thy safety-bringing chariots.*

The words are an admiring expostulation about the mighty works of the Lord, for his people, upon the sea, rivers, and inanimate creatures.

1. The rivers: *Jordan* and its driving back is doubtless especially intended. The Lord shewed his power, in disturbing that antient river in his course, and making his streams run backward. The story of it you have *Josh. iii. 15, 16.* The people being to enter into *Canaan*, the Lord divides the waters of that river, making them beneath to sink away, and those above to stand on an heap. This the prophet magnifies, *Psal. cxiv. 5. What ailest thou, O Jordan, that thou wast driven back?* what marvellous, powerful, disturbing thing is happened to thee, that contrary to thy ancient natural course, thy streams should be frightened, and run back to the springs from whence they came?

2. The sea: that is, the *Red sea*, which in like manner was divided, *Exod. xiv. 21.* which the prophet also admires in the forecited *Psal. The sea saw it and fled. What ailest thou, O thou sea, that thou fledst?* What strong mighty impression of power was on thee, that the multitudes of thy waters should be parted, and thy channel discovered dry to the bottom?

3. *That thou didst ride upon thy horses and thy chariots of salvation.* This you have again *ver. 15. Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses.* These were those clouds and winds which the Lord sent before the *Israelites*, to the sea and *Jordan*, to drive them back. *He maketh the clouds his chariots, and walketh upon the wings of the wind,* *Psal. civ. 3.* So *Psal. xviii. 11. He did fly upon the wings of the wind.* After the manner of men, God is represented as a mighty conqueror, riding before his armies, and making way for them. The power and majesty of God was with, and upon those clouds and winds, which went before his people, to part those mighty waters, that they might pass dry: and therefore they are called his saving chariots, because by them his people were delivered. Or by horses and chariots here you may understand the angels, who are the host of God. *Psal. lxxviii. 17. The chariots of God are twenty thousands, even thousands of angels;* they have appeared as horses and chariots of fire, *2 Kings vi. 17.* And their ministry no doubt the Lord used in these mighty works of drying rivers, and dividing seas. Either way, the glorious power and majesty of God, in his delivering instruments, is set forth.

Thus the words severally, now jointly.

This admiring interrogation includes a negation. *Was the Lord kindled against the rivers, was thy face against the rivers, &c.* Was it that the deep had offended

¹ *Cetera licet abscondere, & in abdito alere; ira se profert, & in faciem exit.* Senec. de ira.

the Most High, that by thine angels, winds, and clouds, thou didst so disturb the floods in their ancient course, and mad'st naked their hidden channels, until the hoary deep cried out for fear, and lifted up his aged hands to the Almighty as it were for pity, *ver. 10*? No surely, no such thing. All those keep the order by thee unto them appointed; it was all for the salvation and deliverance of thy people. God was not angry with *Jordan* when he drove it back, nor with the sea when he divided it, but all was effected for *Israel's* deliverance.

XVII. *Observation.* The very senseless creatures, are as it were sensible of the wrath and power of the Almighty.

Effects of anger being in and upon the deep, *he utters his voice, and lifts up his hands on high*, *ver. 10*. God often in the Scripture sets forth his power and majesty by the trembling of heaven, and the shaking of the earth, the vanishing of mountains, and the bowing of perpetual hills, the professed humble subjection of the most eminent parts of the creation. The sea shall fly as afraid: the rocks as weak, rend, and crumble; the heavens be darkened; *the mountains skip like rams, and the little hills like young sheep*, *Psal. cxiv. 4*.

Τότ' αὖ δ' ὤρη, καὶ γαῖα, καὶ πελώριον
Βυβός θαλάσσης, κρητὼν ὑψὺ μέγα,
ὅταν ἐπιβλήῃ γοργὸν ἔμμελα δακτύλου, *Æschylus, apud Justin. Æpol. 2.*

The heavens shook, the earth dropped at the presence of God, *Psal. lxxviii. 8*. The Almighty Creator holds the whole frame of the building in his own hand, and makes what portion he pleaseth, and when he pleaseth, to tremble, consume, and vanish before him. Tho' many things are not capable of sense and reason, yet he will make them do such things as sense and reason should prompt the whole subjected creation unto, to teach that part their duty who were indued therewith. A servant is beat, to make a child learn his duty.

Use. See hence the stoutness of sinful hearts. More stubborn than the mountains, more flinty than the rocks, more senseless than the great deep. Friend, art thou stronger than *Horeb*? yet that trembled at the presence of this mighty God, whom it never had provoked. Are thy lusts like the streams of *Jordan*? yet they run back from his chariots of salvation. Are thy corruptions more firmly seated on thy soul, than the mountains on their bases? yet they leaped like frightened sheep, before that God against whom they had not sinned. And wilt thou, a small handful of sinful dust, that hast ten thousand times provoked the eyes of his glory, not tremble before him, coming on his horses and chariots of salvation, his mighty works, and powerful word? Shall a lion tremble, and thou not afraid, who art ready to tremble with a thought of that poor creature? Shall the heavens bow, the deep beg for mercy, and thou be senseless? Shall all creatures quake for the sin of man, and sinful man be secure? Know you not that the time is coming, wherein such men will desire the trembling rocks to be a covert to their more affrighted souls?

XVIII. *Observation.* No creatures, seas, nor floods, greater or lesser waters, shall be able to obstruct or hinder God's peoples deliverance, when he hath undertaken it.

Is the sea against them? it shall be parted. Is *Jordan* in the way? it shall be driven back: both sea and *Jordan* shall tremble before him. *Euphrates* shall be dried up, to give the Kings of the *East* a passage, *Rev. xvi. 12*. Waters in the Scriptures are sometimes afflictions, sometimes people and nations. Be they seas, Kings and princes, or be they rivers, inferior persons, they shall not be able to oppose. God has deck'd his house, and made it glorious with the spoils of all opposers. There you have the spoils of *Pharaoh*, gathered up on the shore of the *Red sea*, and dedicated in the house of God, *Exod. xv*. There you have all the armour of *Senacherib's* mighty host, with the rest of their spoils, hung up to shew, *2 Chron. xxxii. 21*. There you have the glory, and throne, and dominion of *Nebuchadnezzar*, himself being turn'd into a beast, *Dan. iv. 33*. There you shall have the carcasses of *Gog* and *Magog*, with all their mighty hosts, for coming to encamp against the city of God, *Ezek. xxxix*. There you have the imperial robes of * *Dioclesian* and his companion, abdicating

* Euseb. vit. Con. Const. Orat.

themselves from the empire for very madness that they could not prevail against the Church. *Kings of armies shall fly apace, and she that tarries at home shall divide the spoil*, Psal. lxxviii. 12. All opposers, though nations and kingdoms, shall perish and be utterly destroy'd, *Isa. lx. 12. Rev. xix. 18.*

God will not exalt any creature unto a pitch of opposition to himself, or to stand in the way of his workings. The very end of all things in their several stations, is to be serviceable to his purposes towards his own. Obedience in senseless creatures is natural, even against the course of nature in the season of deliverance. *Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon, Josh. x. 12. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel, thou shalt become a plain, Zech. iv. 7.* The most mountainous opposers shall be levelled, when the spirit of God sets in for that purpose. There is a strength in every promise and engagement of God unto his people, that is able to carry the whole frame of heaven and earth before it. If they can believe, all things are possible to them that believe. When the decree is to bring forth the fruit of the promise, it will overturn empires, destroy nations, divide seas, ruin armies, open prisons, break chains and fetters, and bear down all before it. As the wind shut up in the earth will shake the pillars as it were of its mighty body, but it will find or make a passage. The least promise of deliverance, if the season thereof be come, tho' it were shut up under strong and mighty powers, crafty counsels, dungeons, and prisons, like the doors and lasting bars of the earth, the truth and power of God shall make them all to tremble, and give birth to his peoples deliverance.

Use. 1. Have we seen nothing of this in our days? No seas divided? no *Jordans* driven back? no mountains revelled? no hills made to tremble? Whence then was the late confusion of armies? casting down of mighty ones? reviving of dead bones? opening of prison doors? bringing out the captive appointed to be slain? Is it not from hence, that nothing can stand against the breaking out of a promise in its appointed season? *Was the Lord displeased with the rivers?* was his anger against the walls and houses, *that he rode upon his horses and chariots of salvation?*

Use 2. Let faith be strengthened in an evil time. Poor distressed soul, all the difficulty of thy deliverance lies in thine own bosom. If the streams of thy unbelief within be not stronger than all seas of opposition without, all will be easy. O learn to stand still with quietness, between an host of *Egyptians* and a raging sea, to see the salvation of God. Be quiet in prison, between your friends bullets, and your enemies swords, God can, God will make a way. If it were not more hard with us to believe wonders, than it is to the promise to effect wonders for us, they would be no wonders, so daily, so continually would they be wrought.

XIX. Observation. God can make use of any of his creatures to be chariots of salvation.

This is the other side of that doctrine which we gathered from *ver. 5. Winds and clouds shall obey him.* ¹ Ravens shall feed *Elijah* that will not feed their own young. The sea shall open for *Israel*, and return upon the *Egyptians*. And this both in an ordinary way, as *Hos. ii. 21, 22.* and in an extraordinary way as before. So many creatures as God hath made, so many instruments of good hath he for his people. This is farther confirmed, *ver. 9.*

Verse 9. Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, thy word: Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.

With nakedness thy bow was made naked. The rest is elliptical, and well supplied in the translation.

The *Verse* hath two parts.

1. A general proposition: *Thy bow was made naked, &c.*
2. A particular confirmation of that proposition by instance: *Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.*

1. The proposition holds out two things.

(1.) What God did: *He made his bow quite naked.*

(2.) The rule he proceeded by herein: *According to the oaths of the tribes, even his word.*

¹ Ἐκβάλλει τὰς νεοτὰς ὁ κόραξ, Arist. Hist. Anima. 6. Pellunt nidis pullos sicut & Corvi, Plin. Nat. Hist.

The assertion of this *Verse* is not of some particular act, or work, as the former; but a general head or fountain of those particular works, which are enumerated in the following *verses*.

(1.) A bow is a weapon of war, an instrument of death, and being ascribed to God, after the manner of men, holds out his strength, power, might, and efficacy to do whatever he pleaseth. And this is said to be quite naked. When a man goes about to use his bow, he pulls it out of his quiver, and so makes it naked. The exercising of God's power is the making naked of his bow. This he did in all those wonders, wherein he stretched out his hand, in bringing his people into the promised land, here pointed at. And it is said, that with nakedness it was made naked, because of those very high dispensations and manifestations of his almighty power. This is the *making naked of his bow*.

(2.) For the rule of this, it is *the oaths of the tribes*; or as afterward, *his word*. The oaths of the tribes, that is, the oaths made to them, the word he stood engaged to them in. The promise God made by oath unto *Abraham*, that he would give him the Land of *Canaan* for an inheritance, even to him and his posterity, *Gen. xii. 7, 13, 14, 15.* is here intimated. This promise was often renewed to him and the following patriarchs. Hence it is called oaths, tho' but the same promise often renewed: and it had the nature of an oath, because it was made a covenant. Now it was all for the benefit of the several tribes, in respect of actual possession, and was lastly renewed to them, *Exod. iii. 17.* Hence called *the oaths of the tribes*, not which they swear to the Lord, but which the Lord swear to them. So afterwards it is called his word: *Thy word*. This then is the purport of this general proposition: O Lord, according as thou promisedst; and engagedst thyself by covenant to *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, with their posterity, that thou wouldst give them the land of *Canaan* to be theirs for an inheritance; so by the dispensation of thy mighty power thou hast fully accomplished it. And this he layeth down for the supportment of faith in a time of trouble.

The words would afford many observations, I shall insist only on one.

XXI. *Observation.* The Lord will certainly make good all his promises and engagements to his people, tho' it cost him the making of his bow quite naked, the manifestation of his power in the utmost dispensations thereof.

God's workings are squared to his engagements. This is still the close of all gracious issues of providence, God hath done all *according as he promised*, *Josh. xxii. 4.* *2 Sam. vii. 21.* He brought out his people of old, *with a mighty hand, with temptations, signs, and wonders, and a stretch'd out arm; and all because he would keep the oath which he had sworn*, and the engagement which he had made to their fathers, *Deut. vii. 8.* What obstacles soever may lie in the way, he hath done it, he will do it. Take one instance, particular places are too many to be insisted on. It was the purpose of his heart to bring his elect home to himself, from their forlorn lost condition. This he engageth himself to do, *Gen. iii. 15.* assuring *Adam* of a recovery from the misery he was involved in by Satan's prevalency. This surely is no easy work. If the Lord will have it done, he must lay out all his attributes in the demonstration of them to the uttermost. His wisdom and power must bow their shoulders (as it were) in Christ unto it: he was the *power of God, and the wisdom of God*^m; his engaged love must be carried along through so many secret mysterious marvels, as *the angels themselves desire to look into*ⁿ, and shall for ever adore. Though the effecting of it required that which man could not do, and God could not suffer; yet his wisdom will find out a way, that he shall both do it, and suffer it, who is both God and man. To make good his engagement to his elect, he spared not his only Son: and in him were *hid*, and by him laid out, *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*^o.

Now this is a precedent of God's proceeding in all other engagements whatsoever. Whatever it cost him, he will spare nothing to make them good to the uttermost. He is our rock, and his work is perfect. A good man, if he want not power, will go through with his serious promises, tho' he be engaged to his own hurt, *Psal. xv. 4.* The power of the mighty God is serviceable to his will to the utmost. He cannot

^m 1 Cor. i. 24.

ⁿ 1 Pet. i. 12.

^o Col. ii. 3.

will what he cannot do: his will and power are essentially the same. And his power shall not be wanting to execute what his goodness hath moved him to engage unto, for his own glory. The reasons of this are:

1. *Deut. xxxii. 4. He is the rock, and his work is perfect, all his ways are judgment, a God of truth, and without iniquity.* Here are many attributes of God to make good this one thing, that his work is perfect. His *ἀνταρξία*, self-sufficiency, perfection, righteousness. I will pitch on one, he is a God of truth. So he is again called, *Psal. xxxi. 5.* and in other places. The truth of God in his promises and engagements requires an accomplishment of them whatever it cost, what power soever is required thereunto. This the saints make their bottom to seek it: *Remember thy loving kindness, which thou sweardest in thy truth*, *Psal. lxxxix. 4.* It is impossible but that should come to pass, which thou hast sworn in thy truth. No stronger plea than, *Remember the word, wherein thou hast caused thy servants to put their trust.* *Jacob* says, he is *less than all the mercy, and all the truth of God*, *Gen. xxxii. 10.* He sees God's truth in all his mercy, by causing all things to come to pass, which he had promised him. It is true, some particular promises have their conditions, whose truth consists not in the relation between the word and the thing, unless the condition intercede. But the great condition under the Gospel being only the good of them, to whom any engagement is made, we may positively lay down, that God's truth requires the accomplishment of every engagement for his peoples good, *Rom. viii. 28.* It is neither mountain nor hill, King, kingdom nor nation, hell nor mortality, nor all combined, that can stand in the way to hinder it, *Mat. xvi. 18.*

2. His people stand in need of all that God hath engaged himself to them for. God's promises are the just measure of his peoples wants. Whatever he hath promised, that his people do absolutely want; and whatsoever they want, that he hath promised: our wants and his promises are every way commensurate. If thou knowest not what thou standest in need of, search the promises and see. Whatever God hath said he will do for thee, that thou hast absolute need should be done. Or if thou art not so well acquainted with the promises, search thine own wants, what thou standest absolutely in need of for thy good, that assuredly God hath promised. If then this be the case of engagements, they shall all be made good. Think you, will God let his people want that, which they have absolute necessity of? By absolute necessity I mean such as is indispensable, as to their present estate and occasions. That may be of necessity in one generation, which is not in another, according to the several employments we are called to. Does God call forth his saints, *to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people, to bind their Kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute upon them the judgment written*, as *Psal. cxlix. 7, 8, 9*? Doth he bring them forth to burn the whore, to fight with the beast, and overcome him and his followers? It is of indispensable necessity, that he gives them glorious assistance in their undertakings. They shall be assisted, protected, carried on, though it cost him the making of his bow quite naked. According to the several conditions he calls them to, the several issues of providence which he will have them serve in, so want they his appearance in them, with them, for them; and it shall be present. Let them be assured they are in his way, and then though some prove false and treacherous, some base and cowardly; though many combine and associate themselves against them in many places, in all places; tho' whole kingdoms, and mighty armies appear for their ruin; be they reviled and clamoured by all round about them, all is one; help they need, and help they shall have, or God will make his bow quite naked.

Use 1. This day is this doctrine fulfilled before us. *God's bow is made quite naked, according to his word.* We are less than all the truth he hath shewed unto us. Though great working and mighty power hath been required, such as he hath not shewn in our days, nor in the days of our fathers; yet the Lord hath not stood at it, for his word's sake, wherein he hath made us put our trust. I speak of the general mercies we have received. The surrender of *Colchester*, the particular celebrated this day, tho' marching in the rear for time, is for the weight in the van, a mercy of the first magnitude. *Essex* hath seen more power in a three months recovery, than in the protection of six years. That the mouths of men are stopped, and their faces filled with shame, who made it their trade to revile and threaten the saints of God; that the adverse strength, which hath lain hid these seven years,

should be drawn forth, united, and broken to pieces; that the people of God, divided, and mutually exasperated through their abuse of peace, should by the sword of a common enemy, and the help of a common friend, have their wrath abated, their counsels united, and their persons set in a hopeful way of closing, or forbearance; that God by their own counsels should shut up men, collected from sundry parts to ruin others, in a city with gates and walls for their own ruin; that they should deny peace tendered upon such conditions, because of the exigencies of the time, as might have left them power, as well as will for a farther mischief; that such salvation should go forth in other parts, as that the proceedings here should not be interrupted; that the bitter service which men here underwent, should ever and anon be sweetened with refreshing tidings from other places, to keep up their spirits in wet, watching, cold, and loss of blood: all these, I say, and sundry other such like things as these, are *the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes*.

Especially let us remember how in *three things* the Lord made his bow quite naked in this late deliverance.

(1.) In leavening the counsels of the enemy with their own folly.

(2.) In ordering all events to his own praise.

(3.) By controuling with his mighty power the issue of all undertakings.

(1.) In leavening their counsels with their own folly. ⁹ God's power, and the efficacy of his providence, is not more clearly manifested in any thing than in his effectual working in the debates, advices, consultations, and reasonings of his enemies, compassing his ends by their inventions. When God is in none of the thoughts of men by his fear, he is in them all by his providence. The sun is operative with his heat, where he reacheth not with his light, and hath an influence on precious minerals, in the depths and dark bottoms of rocks and mountains. The all-piercing providence of God, dives into the deep counsels of the hearts of the sons of men, and brings our precious gold from thence, where the gracious light of his countenance shines not at all. Men freely advise, debate, use, and improve their own reasons, wisdom, interests, not once casting an eye to the Almighty, and yet all this while do his work, more than their own. All the counsellings, plottings of *Joseph's* brethren, all the transactions of the *Jews, Herod, and Pilate*, about the death of Christ, with other the like instances, abundantly prove it. Take a few instances, wherein God *made his bow quite naked* in the counsels of his and our enemies.

In general they consult to take arms, wherein God had fully appeared against them, when in all probability their work would have been done without. Had they not fought, by this time they had been conquerors. One half year's peace more, which we desired on any terms, and they would on no terms bear, in all likelihood had set them where they would be. Their work went on, as if they had hired the kingdom to serve them in catching weather. What with some mens folly, others treachery, all our divisions, had not their own counsels set them on fighting, I think we should suddenly have chosen them, and theirs, to be umpires of our quarrels. God saw when it was time to deal with them. In their undertaking in our own county, I could give sundry instances, how God mixed a perverse spirit of folly and error in all their counsels. A part of the magistracy of the county is seized on, therein their intentions towards the residue is clearly discovered, yet not any attempt made to secure them, which they might easily have accomplished, although they could not but suppose, that there were some Gentlemen of publick and active spirits left, that would be industrious in opposition unto them. Was not the Lord in their counsels also, when they suffered a small inconsiderable party in a little village within a few miles of them, to grow into such a body as at length they durst not attempt, when they might have broken their whole endeavour with half a hundred of men? Doubtless of innumerable such things as these, we may say with the prophet, *The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived,*

⁹ Quod homines peccant eorum est, quod peccando hoc vel illud agant ex virtute Dei est, tenebras prout visum est dividens, August. de præd. Oportet hereses esse, sed tamen non ideo bonum hereses, quia eas esse oportebat, quasi non & malum operuerit esse; nam & dominum tradi oportebat, sed va traditori. Tertul. præf ad Hæc.

Gen. xlv. 7. Gen. l. 20. Acts iv. 27, 28.

they have seduced the people, even they that are the stay of their tribes. The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of them, they have caused the people to err in every work, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit, Isa. xix. 13, 14. Doubtless the wrath of man shall praise the Lord, and the remainder of it will he restrain.

(2.) In ordering all events to his own praise. The timing of the enemies eruptions in several places is that which fills all hearts with wonder, and all mouths with discourse in these days. From the first to the last they had their season. Had they come together, to the eyes of flesh the whole nation had been swallowed up in that deluge. In particular let *Essex* take notice of the goodness of God. The high thoughts and threats of men, which made us for divers weeks fear a massacre, were not suffered to break out into open hostility, until the very next day after their strength was broken, in the neighbour country of *Kent*. As if the Lord should have said, I have had you in a chain all this while: though you have shewed your teeth, you have not devoured: now go out of my chain, I have a net ready for you. For the armies coming to our assistance, I cannot see how we needed them many days sooner, or could have wanted them one day longer. Farther, these homebred eruptions were timely seasoned, to rouse the discontented soldiery, and divided nation, to be ready to resist the *Scottish* invasion: God also being magnified in this, that in this sweet disposal of events, unto his glory, the counsels of many of those, in whom we thought we might confide, run totally cross to the appearance of God in his providence. *What shall we say to these things? If the Lord be for us, who shall be against us? All these things come forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in operation,* Isa. xxviii. 29. Whoso is wise will ponder them, and they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.

(3.) In controuling mighty actions. I mean giving success to his people in all their undertakings. The commander in chief of all the forces in this kingdom, since his sitting down before *Colchester*, was proffered a pass to go beyond the seas for his security. Whence is it, that he hath now the necks of his enemies, and hath given any of them their lives at their entreaty? Greater armies than this have been buried under lesser walls. Did not the number of the besieged at first exceed the number of the besiegers? were not their advantages great? their skill in war amongst men of their own persuasion famous and renowned? So that the sitting down before it was judged an action meet only for them, who could believe they should see the bow of God made quite naked. It had been possible, doubtless, to reason's eye, that many of those fictions, wherewith a faction in the great city fed themselves, of the many routings, slaughters, and destructions of the army, might have been true. Some of them, I say: for some were as childish, as hellish. In brief, they associated themselves, and were broken in pieces. High walls, trowning imaginations, lofty threats, all brought down. *So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him be as the sun, when he goeth forth in his might: and let the land have rest for many years,* Judg. v. 31.

Use 2. This will discover unto us the bottom and rise of all God's appearances for his people; even the engaging of his own free grace. He doth not *make his bow quite naked* according to their deservings, but his own word; not because they of themselves are better than others, but because he loves them more than others. Were God's assistances suited to our walkings, they would be very uneven; but his good will is constant, so are our deliverances.

Use 3. Be exhorted to thankfulness, not verbal, but real; not the exultation of carnal affections, but the savoury obedience of a sound mind. There are many ingredients in thanksgiving: suitable and seasonable obedience to answer the will of God in his mercies is doubtless the crown of all. Look then under the enjoyment of blessings in general, to close walking with God in the duties of the covenant; and in particular, to the especial work of this your generation, and you are in the way to be thankful.

Use 4. Be sedulously careful to prevent that, which God hath mightily decried by our late mercies, *viz.* mutual animosities, strife, contention, and violence, against one

^c In beneficio reddendo plus animus, quam census operatur, Ambf. Offi. lib. 1 cap. 32.

another, I mean of those that fear his name. God hath interposed in our quarrels from heaven. The language of our late deliverance is: Be quiet, *lest a worse thing happen unto you.* Our poor brethren of Scotland would not see the hatefulnes of their animosities towards their friends, until God suffered that very thing to be the means to deliver them up to the power of their enemies. The weapons they had formed were used against themselves. Let us learn betimes to agree about our pasture, lest the wolves of the wilderness devour us. Persecution and idolatry have ruined all the states of the Christian world.

2. Of the assertion we have spoken hitherto. Come we now to the particular confirmation of it by instance. *Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. Cleave the earth, or make channels in the earth,* for waters to flow in.

Another most eminent work of Almighty power is here set forth. Eminent in itself, and eminent in its typical signification. And the same thing being twice done hath a plural expression, *rivers.*

(1.) Eminent of itself. The bringing of streams of waters from the rock, for the thirsty people in the wilderness, is that which is here celebrated. Now this the Lord did twice: First, *Exod. xvii. 6.* when the people were in *Rephidim*, in the first year after their coming from *Egypt*, they fainted in their journies for want of water, and (according to the wonted custom of that rebellious people) complained with murmuring. So they extorted all their mercies, and therefore they were attended with such sore judgments. Whilst the meat was in their mouths, the plague was on their bones. Mercies extorted by murmurings, unseasoned with loving kindness, though they may be quails in the mouth will be plagues in the belly. Let us take heed lest we repine the Almighty, into a full harvest, and lean soul, *Psal. cvi. 15.* Get and keep mercies in God's way, or there is death in the pot.

Forty years after this, when the first whole evil generation was consumed, the children, who were risen up in their father's stead, fall a murmuring for water in the wilderness of *Zin*, and with a profligacy of rebellion wish they had been consumed with others in the former plagues, *Numb. xx. 4.* here also the Lord gives them water, and that in abundance, *ver. 11.* Now of this observe,

[1.] The places from whence this water marvelously issued. They were rocks that, in all probability, never had spring from the creation of the world. Farther, they are observed to be rocks of flint, *Psal. cxiv. 8. Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.* So *Deut. viii. 15.* A rock into a pool, and a flint into a stream, is much beyond *Sampson's* riddle, of sweetness from the eater.

[2.] The abundance of waters that gushed out: waters to satisfy that whole congregation, with all their cattle, consisting of some millions. Yea, and not only they, but all the beasts of that wilderness were refreshed thereby also. *Isa. xliii. 20. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragon and the owl; because I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.* The very worst of the sons of men, dragons and owls fare the better for God's protecting providence towards his own.

And all this was in such abundance, that it was as plentiful as a sea. *He clave the rock in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great deep; he brought streams also out of the rocks, and caused waters to run down like rivers,* *Psal. lxxviii. 15, 16.* So also it is celebrated *Isa. xli. 18. xlviii. 21. Hos. xiii. 5.* and in many other places. Great deliverances call for frequent remembrances.

Thus were rivers brought out of the rocks, and with or for these rivers God did cleave the earth, that is, either he provided channels for those streams to run in, that they might not be wasted on the surface of that sandy wilderness, but preserved for the use of his people; or else the streams were so great and strong, that they pierced the earth, and parted channels for themselves. Great rivers of water, brought out of flinty rocks, running into prepared channels, to refresh a sinful, thirsty people, in a barren wilderness, I think, is a remarkable mercy.

¹ Ἡ διαφωτιστικὴ τῆς ψυχῆς, τὴν ὁμόνοιαν τῆς πίστεως συνίσταται, *Iren. Epist. ad Vict. apud Euseb. lib. 5. cap. 23. φιλοσοφία*
² εἰς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ζῆλῳται περὶ μὴ ἀνηκούσας εἰς σωτηρίαν, *Clem. Ep. ad Cor.*

³ Vir bonus commune bonum, *Gen. xxxi. 2.*

(3.) As it was eminent in itself, so likewise is it exalted in its typical concernment. Is there nothing but flints in this rock? nothing but water in these streams? nothing but the rod of *Moses* in the blows given to it? Did the people receive no other refreshment, but only in respect of their bodily thirst? Yes, saith the Apostle, *They drank of that spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ*, 1 Cor. x. 4. Was not this rock a sign of that rock of ages, on which the *Church is built*? Mat. xvi. 18. Did not *Moses* smiting hold out his being *smitten* with the rod of God, Isa. liii. 4, 5? Was not the pouring out of these plentiful streams as the pouring out of his precious blood, in a sea of mercy, abundantly sufficient to refresh the whole fainting Church in the wilderness? *Latet Christus in petra, here is Christ in this rock.* Had Rome had wisdom to build on this rock, though she had not had an infallibility, as she vainly now pretends, she might have had an infallibility (if I may so speak) yea she had never quite failed. Give me leave to take a few observations from hence. As,

[1.] Sinners must be brought to great extremities, to make them desire the blood of Jesus. Weary and thirsty before rock-water come. Thirst is a continually galling pressure. When a soul gaspeth like a parched land, and is as far from self-refreshment, as a man from drawing waters out of a flint, then shall the side of Christ be opened to him. You that are full of your lusts, drunk with the world, here is not a drop for you. If you never come into the wilderness, you shall never have rock-water.

[2.] Mercy to a convinced sinner seems oft-times as remote, as rivers from a rock of flint. The truth is, he never came near mercy, who thought not himself far from it. When the *Israelites* cried, We are ready to die for thirst, then stood they on the ground, where rivers were to run.

[3.] Thirsty souls shall want no water, though it be fetched for them out of a rock. Panters after the blood of Jesus shall assuredly have refreshment and pardon, through the most unconquerable difficulties. Though grace and mercy seem to be locked up from them, like water in a flint, whence fire is more natural than water; yet God will not strike the rock of his justice and their flinty hearts together, to make hell-fire sparkle about their ears; but with a rod of mercy on Christ, that abundance of water may be drawn out for their refreshment.

[4.] The most eminent temporal blessings, and suitable refreshment (water from a rock for them that are ready to perish) is but an obscure representation of that love of God, and refreshment of souls, which is in the blood of Jesus. Carnal things are exceeding short of spiritual, temporal things of eternal.

[5.] The blood of Christ is abundantly sufficient for his whole Church to refresh themselves, streams, rivers, a whole sea.

These, and the like observations, flowing from the typical relation of the blessing intimated, shall not farther be insisted on; one only I shall take from the historical truth.

XXI. *Observation.* God sometimes bringeth plentiful deliverances and mercies for his people from beyond the ken of sense and reason, yea from above the ordinary reach of much precious faith.

I mean not what it ought to reach, which is all the omnipotency of God; but what ordinarily it doth, as in this very business it was with *Moses*. I say, *plentiful deliverances*, mercies like the waters that gushed out in abundant streams, until the earth was cloven with rivers; that the people should not only have a taste and away, but drink abundantly, and leave for the beasts of the field. *From beyond the ken of sense and reason*, by events which a rationally wise man is no more able to look into, than an eye of flesh is able to see water in a flint; or a man probably suppose, that divers millions of creatures should be refreshed with waters out of a rock, where there was never any spring from the foundation of the world.

Now concerning this observe,

1. That God hath done it.

2. That he hath promised he will yet do it.

3. Why he will so do?

1. He hath done it. I might here tire you with precedents. I could lead you from that mother deliverance, the womb of all others, the redemption that is in the blood of Jesus, down through many dispensations of old, and of late, holding out this

this proposition to the full. One shall suffice me, and if some of you cannot help yourselves with another, you are very senseless.

Look upon *Peter's* deliverance, *Acts* xii. The night before he was to be slain, he was kept safe in a prison, a prison he had neither will nor power to break. He was bound with two chains, beyond his skill to unloose, or force asunder. Kept he was by sixteen soldiers, doubtless men of blood and vigilancy, having this to keep them waking, that if *Peter* escaped with his head, they were to lose theirs. Now that his deliverance was above sense and reason, himself intimates, *ver.* 11. *He hath delivered me from the expectation of the Jews.* The wise, subtle *Jews* concluded the matter so secure, that without any doubts or fears they were in expectation of his execution the next day. That it was also beyond the ready reach of much precious faith, you have an example in those believers, who were gathered together in the house of *Mary*, *ver.* 12. calling her mad, who first affirmed it, *ver.* 15. and being astonished when their eyes beheld it, *ver.* 16. the whole seeming so impossible to carnal *Herod*, after its accomplishment, that he slays the keepers as false in their hellish trust: a just recompence for trusty villains.

The time would fail me to speak of *Isaac*, and *Joseph*, *Gideon*, *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job*, all precedents worthy your consideration. View them at your leisure, and you will have leisure, if you intend to live by faith.

2. He hath said it. It is a truth abounding in promises and performances. I shall hold out one or two: it will be worth your while to search for others yourselves. He that digs for a mine, finds many a piece of gold by the way.

Isa. xli. 14, 15, 16. *Fear not thou, worm Jacob, and ye few men of Israel. Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth, thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, &c.* To make a worm a threshing instrument with teeth, to cause that instrument to beat mountains and hills into chaff, that chaff to be blown away with the wind, that that worm may rejoice in God; to advance a small handful of despised ones to the ruin of mountainous empires and kingdoms, until they be broken and scattered to nothing, is a mercy that comes from beyond the ken of an ordinary eye.

Ezek. xxxvii. 3. The prophet professeth that the deliverance promised was beyond his apprehension. *Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.* The Lord intimates in the following verses, that he will provide a means for his Church's recovery, when it seemeth as remote therefrom, as dry bones scattered upon the face of the earth are from a mighty living army. This he calls opening their graves, *ver.* 12, 13. The reasons of this are,

1. Because he would have his people wholly wrapt up in his all-sufficiency, not to streighten themselves with what their faith can ken in a promise, much less to what their reason can perceive in appearance. In the application of promises to particular trials and extremities faith oftentimes is exceedingly disturbed, either in respect of persons, or things, or seasons; but when it will wholly swallow up itself in all-sufficiency, the fountain of all promises, there is no place for fear or disputing. Have your souls in spiritual trials never been driven from all your outworks unto this main fort? Hath not all hold of promises in time of trial given place to temptations, until you have fallen down in all-sufficiency, and there found peace? God accounts a flight to the strong tower of his name to be the most excellent valour; this is faith's first, proper, and most immediate object; to particular promises it is drawn out, on particular occasions; here is, or should be its constant abode, *Gen.* xvii. 1. And indeed the soul will never be prepared to all the will of God, until its whole complacency be taken up in this sufficiency of the Almighty. Here God delights to have the soul give up itself to a contented losing of all its reasonings, even in the infinite unsearchableness of his goodness and power. Therefore will he sometimes send forth such streams of blessings, as can flow from no other fountain, that his may know where to lie down in peace. Here he would have us secure our shallow bottoms in this quiet sea, this infinite ocean, whither neither wind nor storm do once approach. Those blustering temptations which rage at the shore, when we were half at land, and half at sea, half upon the bottom of our own reason, and half upon the ocean

of providence, reach not at all unto this deep. Oh, if we could in all trials lay ourselves down in these arms of the Almighty, his all-sufficiency in power and goodness! Oh, how much of the haven should we have in our voyage, how much of home in our pilgrimage, how much of heaven in this wretched earth! Friends, throw away your staves, break the arm of flesh, lie down here quietly in every dispensation, and you shall see the salvation of God. I could lose myself in setting out of this, wherein I could desire you would lose your selves in every time of trouble. *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them who have no might, he encreaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not be faint,* Isa. xl. 28, 29, 30, 31.

2. To convince the unbelieving world itself of his power, providence, and love to them that put their trust in him; that they may be found to cry: *Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God who ruleth in the earth,* Psal. lviii. 11. When the *Egyptian* magicians see real miracles, beyond all their juggling pretences, they cry out: *This is the finger of God,* Exod. viii. 19. Profane *Nebuchadnezzar* beholding the deliverance of those three worthies from the fiery furnace, he owns them for the *servants of the most high God,* Dan. iii. 26. *Daniel* being preserved in the lions den, *Darius* acknowledgeth the power and kingdom of the living God, Dan. vi. 26. Glorious appearances of God for his people, beyond the reach of reason, wrecks from the world amazement, or acknowledgment, and in both God is exalted. He will appear in such distresses, as that he will be seen of his very enemies: they shall not be able with the *Philistines* to question *whether it be his hand, or a chance happened to them,* 1 Sam. vi. 9. but conclude with the *Egyptians*, that fly they must, for God fights for his people, Exod. xiv. 25. If God should never give blessings but in such a way, as reason might discover their dependance on secondary causes, men would not see his goings, nor acknowledge his operations. But when he mightily makes bare his arm, in events beyond their imaginations, they must veil before him.

Use 1. Consider whether the mercy celebrated this day ought not to be placed in this series of deliverances, brought from beyond the ken of sense and reason, from above the reach of much precious faith. For the latter I leave it to your own experience, to the former let me for the present desire your consideration of these five things.

(1.) By whom you were surprised and put under restraint. Now these were of two sorts: [1.] The heads and leaders: [2.] The tumultuous multitude.

[1.] For the first, some of them being dead, and some under durance, I shall not say any thing. *Nullum cum victis certamen, & aethere cassis.* I leave the stream from the flint to your own thoughts.

[2.] For the multitude, an enraged, headless, lawless, godless multitude, gathered out of inns, taverns, alehouses, stables, highways, and the like nurseries of piety and pity. Such as these having gotten their superiors under their power, their governors under their disposal, their restrainers under their restraint, their oppressors, as they thought, under their fury, what was it that kept in their fury, and their revenge, which upon the like occasions and advantages hath almost always been executed? Search your stories, you will not find many that speak of such a deliverance. For a few governors prevailed on, unto durance, by a godless rout, in an insurrection, and yet to come off in peace and safety, is surely a work of more than ordinary providence.

(2.) Consider the season of your surprisal: when all the kingdom was in an uproar, and the arm of flesh almost quite withered as to supply, the North invaded, the South full of insurrections, *Wales* unsubdued, the great city, at least, suffering men to lift up their hands against us; so that to the eye of reason, the issue of the whole was, if not lost, yet exceedingly hazardous, and so your captivity endless. Had they gone on, as was probable they would, whether you had this day been brought out to execution, or thrust into a dungeon, or carried up and down as a pageant,

* *Idem huic urbi dominandi finis erit, qui parendi fuerit,* Seneca, de Rom.

I know not; but much better condition, I am sure, rationally you could not expect.

(3.) The end of your surprisal. Amongst others, this was apparently one, to be a reserve for their safety, who went on in all ways of ruin. You were kept to preserve them in those ways, wherein they perished. Whether could reason reach this, or no, that you being in their power, kept on purpose for their rescue, if brought to any great streight, with the price of your heads to redeem their own, that they should be brought to greater distress than ever any before in this kingdom, and you be delivered, without the least help to them in their need? It was beyond your friends reason, who could not hope it; it was beyond your enemies reason, who never feared it; if you believed it, you have the comfort of it.

(4.) The refusal of granting an exchange for such persons, as they accounted more considerable than yourselves, and whose enlargement might have advantaged the cause they professed to maintain exceedingly more than your restraint, what doth it but proclaim your intended ruin? This was the way of deliverance, which for a long season reason chiefly rested on, the main pillar of all its building; which when it was cut in two, what could in it be seen but desolation?

(5.) The streights you were at length reduced to, between your enemies swords and your friends bullets, which intended for your deliverance, without the safeguard of providence, might have been your ruin, piercing more than once the house wherein you were. Surely it was then an eminent work of faith to *stand still, and see the salvation of God.*

The many passages of providence evidently working for your preservation, which I have received from some of yourselves, I willingly pass over. What I have already said is sufficient to declare, that to reason's eye, you were as dead bones upon the earth. For our parts, who were endangered spectators, at the best, we were but in the prophet's frame, and to any question about your enlargement, could answer only, *The Lord alone knows.* And now behold the Lord hath chosen you out to be examples of his loving kindness, in fetching mercy for you from beyond the ken of reason, yea from above the reach of much precious faith. He hath brought water for you out of the flint. Reckon your deliverance under this head of operations, and I hope you will not be unthankful.

Use 2. You that have received so great mercy, we that have seen it, and all who have heard the doctrine confirmed, let us learn to live by faith. Live above all things that are seen; subject them to the cross of Christ. Measure your condition by your interest in God's all-sufficiency. Do not in distress calculate, what such and such things can effect; but what God hath promised. Reckon upon that, for it shall come to pass. If you could get but this one thing by all your sufferings and dangers, to trust the Lord to the utmost extent of his promises, it would prove a blessed captivity. All carnal fears would then be conquered, all sinful compliances with wicked men removed, &c.

Use 3. Be exhorted to great thankfulness, you that have been made partakers of great deliverances. In great distresses very nature prompts the sons of men to great promises. You have heard the ridiculous story of him, who in a storm at sea promised to dedicate a wax candle to the Blessed Virgin, as big as the mast of his ship, which he was resolved when he came on shore to pay with one of twelve in the pound. Let not the moral of that fable be found in any of you. Come not short of any of your engagements. No greater discovery of an hypocritical frame, than to flatter the Lord in trouble, and to decline upon deliverance in cold blood. The Lord of heaven give you strength to make good all your resolutions: as private persons, in all godliness and honesty, following hard after God in every known way of his; as magistrates, in justice, equity, and faithful serving the kingdom of Christ. Especially let them never beg in vain for help at your hands, who did not beg help in vain for you at the hands of God.

Use 4. Consider, if there be so much sweetness in a temporal deliverance, Oh, what excellency is there in that eternal redemption, which we have in the blood of

¹ Erant Homicidae, Tyranni, fures, adulteri, raptores, Sacrilegi, proditores, infra ista omnia, ingratus est, Senec. Benef. lib. 1.
Gratiarum cessat decursus, ubi recursus non fuerit, Bern. Sermon. 50.

² Si tanti vitrum quanti Margaritum? Tertul.

Jesus! If we rejoice for being delivered from them who could have killed the body, what unspeakable rejoicing is there in that mercy whereby we are freed from the wrath to come! Let this possess your thoughts, let this fill your souls, let this be your haven from all former storms. And here strike I sail, in this to abide with you, and all the saints of God for ever.



* S E R M O N XXXI.

Righteous Zeal encouraged by Divine Protection.

With a Discourse about Toleration, and the duty of the Civil Magistrate about Religion, thereunto annexed.



To the Right Honourable the Commons of *England*,
assembled in Parliament.

SIRS,



*I*t hath always suited the wisdom of God to do great things in difficult seasons. He sets up walls in troublous times, Dan. ix. 25. His builders must hold swords and spears, as well as instruments of labour, Neh. iv. 16. Yea, while sin continueth in its course here (which began in heaven, and having contemporized with the earth, shall live for ever in hell) great works for God will cause great troubles amongst men. The holy, harmless Reconciler of heaven and earth bids us expect the sword, to attend his undertakings for, and way of making peace, Mat. x. 34. All the waves in the world arise to their height and roaring, from the confronting of the breath of God's spirit, and the vapours of mens corruptions. Hence seasons receive their degrees of difficulty, according to the greatness and weight of the works which in them God will accomplish. To their worth and excellency is man's opposition proportioned. This the instruments of his glory in this generation shall continually find true to their present trouble, and future comfort.

As the days approach for the delivery of the decree, to the shaking of heaven and earth; and all the powers of the world, to make way for the establishment of that kingdom, which shall not be given to another people; (the great expectation of the saints of the Most High before the consummation of all) so tumults, troubles, vexations, and disquietness, must certainly grow and increase among the sons of men.

* This Sermon was preach'd before the Honourable House of Commons, Jan. 31. 1648. Being a Day of solemn Humiliation.

^a Heb. xii. 26, 27. Dan. vii. 27. Ego nisi tumultus istos vidissem, verbum Dei in mundo non esse duxissem. Luth.

A dead woman (*says the proverb*) will not be carried out of her house under four men. Much less will living men of wisdom and power be easily and quietly dispossessed of that share and interest in the things of Christ, which long continued usurpation hath deluded them into an imagination of being their own inheritance. This then being shortly to be effected, and the scale being ready to turn against the man of sin, notwithstanding his balancing it, in opposition to the witness of Jesus, with the weight and poise of earthly power; no wonder if heaven, earth, sea, and dry land, be shaken, in their giving place to the things that cannot be moved. God Almighty having called you forth, Right Honourable, at his entrance to the rolling up of the nations heavens like a scroll^b, to serve him in your generation in the high places of Armageddon^c; you shall be sure not to want experience of that opposition, which is raised against the great work of the Lord, which generally swells most against the visible instruments thereof.

And would to God, you had only the devoted sons of Babel to contend withal, that the men of this shaking earth were your only antagonists; that the malignity of the dragon's tail had had no influence on the stars of heaven, to prevail with them to fight in their courses against you^d. But *jacta est alea*, the providence of God must be served, according to the discovery made of his own unchangeable will, and not the mutable interests and passions of the sons of men. For verily the Lord of hosts hath purposed to pollute the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth, *Isa. xxiii. 9.*

The contradictions of sinners against all that walk in the paths of righteousness and peace, with the supportment which their spirits may receive (as being promised) who pursue those ways, notwithstanding those contradictions, are in part discovered in the ensuing sermon: the foundation of that whole transaction of things, which is therein held out, in reference to the present dispensations of providence (being nothing but an entrance into the unravelling of the whole web of iniquity, interwoven of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, in opposition to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus) I chose not to mention. Neither shall I at present add any thing thereabout, but only my desire that it may be eyed as the granted basis of the following discourse. Only by your very favourable acceptance of the making out those thoughts, which were the hasty conception, and like Jonah's gourd, the child of a night or two (which with prayer for a rooting in the hearts of them to whom they were delivered, had certainly withered in their own leaves, had they not received warmth and moisture from your commands in general, and the particular desires of many of you, to give them a life of a few days longer) I am encouraged to the annexing of a few lines, as a free-will offering to attend the following product of obedience.

Now this shall not be to the opposition which you do, and shall yet farther meet withal; but as to the causes, real, or pretended, which are held

^b *Isa. xxxiv. 4. 5.*^c *Rev. xvi. 16.*^d *Rev. xii. 4.*

forth as the bottom of that contradiction, wherewith on every side you are encompassed.

The things in reference whereunto your procedence is laden with such criminations, as these sad days of recompence have found to be comets portending no less than blood, are first civil, then religious.

For the first, as their being beyond the bounds of my calling gives them sanctuary from being called forth to my consideration; so neither have I the least thoughts with Absalom of a more orderly carrying on of affairs, might my desires have any influence into their disposal. Waiting at the throne of grace, that those whom God hath intrusted with, and enabled for the transaction of these things, may be directed and supported in their employment, is the utmost of my undertaking herein.

For the other, or religious things, the general interest I have in them as a Christian being improved by the superadded title of a minister of the Gospel (tho' unworthy the one name, and the other) gives me not only such boldness as accrueth from enjoyed favour, but also such a right as will support me to plead concerning them, before the most impartial judicature.

And this I shall do (as I said before) merely in reference to those criminations, which are laid by conjectural presumptions on your Honourable Assembly, and made a cause of much of that opposition and contradiction you meet withal. Now in particular, it is the toleration of all religions, or invented ways of worship, wherein your constitutions are confidently antedated in many places of the nation, the thing itself withal being held out as the most enormous apprehension, and desperate endeavour for the destruction of truth and godliness, that ever entered the thoughts of men professing the one and the other. The contest hereabout being adhuc sub Judice, and there being no doubt but that the whole matter, commonly phrased as above, hath (like other things) sinful and dangerous extremes: I deemed it not amiss to endeavour the pouring a little cold water upon the common flames, which are kindled in the breasts of men about this thing. And who knows whether the words of a weak nothing may not, by the power of the Fountain of beings, give some light into the determination and establishment of a thing of so great concernment and consequence, as this is generally conceived to be? What is in this my weak undertaking of the Lord, I shall beg of him that it may be received; what is of myself I beg of you that it may be pardoned. That God Almighty would give you to prove all things that come unto you in his way, and to hold fast that which is good, granting you unconquerable assistance, in constant perseverance, is the prayer of,

Coggeshall,
Feb. 28.

Your devoted Servant

in our dearest Lord,

JOHN OWEN.
JER.

JER. XV. 19, 20.

Let them return to thee, but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

THE words of my text having a full dependance upon, and flowing out from, the main subject matter of the whole *Chapter*, I must of necessity take a view thereof, and hold out unto you the mind of God contained therein, before I enter upon the part thereof chiefly intended. And this I shall do with very brief observations, that I may not anticipate myself, from a full opening and application of the words of my text.

And this the rather are my thoughts led unto, because the whole transaction of things between the Lord and a stubbornly sinful nation, exceedingly accommodated to the carrying on of the controversy he is now pleading with that wherein we live, is set out (as we say) to the life therein.

Of the whole *Chapter*, there be these five parts:

First, The denunciation of fearful wasting, destroying, judgments against *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, ver. 3, and so on to ver. 10.

Secondly, The procuring deserving cause of these overwhelming calamities, ver. 4. and 6.

Thirdly, The inevitableness of those judgments, and the inexorableness of the Lord, as to the accomplishment of all the evil denounced, ver. 1.

Fourthly, The state and condition of the prophet, with the frame and deportment of his spirit, under those bitter dispensations of providence, ver. 10. and 15, 16, 17, 18.

Fifthly, The answer and appearance of God unto him upon the making out of his complaint, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14. and 19, 20, 21.

My text lieth in the *last part*, but yet with such dependance on the former, as inforceth to a consideration of them.

First, There is the denunciation of fearful wasting, destroying judgments to sinful *Jerusalem*, ver. 2. and so onwards, with some interposed ejaculations, concerning her inevitable ruin, as ver. 5, 6.

Here's death, sword, famine, captivity, ver. 2. banishment, ver. 4. unpitied desolation, ver. 5. redoubled destruction, bereaving, fanning, spoiling, &c. ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. That universal devastation of the whole people, which came upon them in the *Babylonish* captivity, is the thing here intended, the means of its accomplishment by particular plagues and judgments, in their several kinds (for the greater dread and terror) being at large annumerated; the faithfulness of God also being made hereby to shine more clear, in the dispersion of that people; doing, not only for the main, what before he had threatned, but in particular, executing the judgments recorded, *Luke* xxvi. 14. &c. *Deut.* xxviii. 15. &c. fulfilling hereby what he had devised, accomplishing the word he had commanded in the days of old, *Lam.* ii. 17.

That which hence I shall observe is only from the variety of these particulars, which are held out as the means of the intended desolation.

Observ. God's treasures of wrath against a sinful people, have sundry and various issues for the accomplishment of the appointed end.

When God walks contrary to a people, it is not always in one path, he hath seven ways to do it, and will do it *seven times*, *Lev.* xxvi. 24. He strikes not always with one weapon, nor in one place. As there is with him *ποικίλη χάρις*, manifold and various grace, *1 Pet.* iv. 10. love and compassion making out itself in choice variety, suited to our manifold indigencies; so there is, *θεγή τε θησαυρισμένη*, *Rom.* ii. 5. stored, treasured wrath, suiting itself in its flowings out to the provocations of stubborn sinners.

The first emblem of God's wrath against man, was a *flaming sword turning itself every way*, Gen. iii. 24. Not only in one or two, but in all their paths, he meeteth them with his flaming sword. As a wild beast in a net^e, so are sinners under inexorable judgments; the more they strive, the more they are enwrapt and entangled; they shuffle themselves from under one calamity, and fall into another: *as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand upon the wall, and a serpent bit him*, Amos v. 19. Oh, remove this one plague, saith *Pharaoh*^f; if he can escape from under this pressure, he thinks he shall be free: but, when he fled from the lion, still the bear met him, and when he went into the house, the serpent bit him. And as the flaming sword turns every way, so God can put it into every thing. To those that cry, *Give me a King*, God can give him in his anger; and from those that cry, *Take him away*, he can take him away in his wrath, *Hosea* xiii. 10, 11.

Oh that this might seal up instruction to our own souls! What variety of calamities have we been exercised withal, for sundry years? What *Pharaoh* like spirits have we had under them? Oh, that we were delivered this once, and then all were well! How do we spend all our thoughts to extricate ourselves from our present pressures? If this hedge, this pit were passed, we should have smooth ground to walk in: not considering that God can fill our safest paths with snares and serpents. Give us peace, give us wealth, give us as we were, with our own, in quietness. Poor creatures! Suppose all these desires were in sincerity, and not as with the most they are, fair colours of foul and bloody designs; yet if peace were, and wealth were, and former things were, and God were not, what would it avail you? Cannot he poison your peace, and canker your wealth? And when you were escaped out of the field from the lion and the bear, appoint a serpent to bite you, leaning upon the walls of your own house? In vain do you seek to stop the streams, while the fountains are open; turn yourselves whither you will, bring yourselves into what condition you can, nothing but peace and reconciliation with the God of all these judgments, can give you rest in the day of visitation. You see what variety of plagues are in his hand, changing of condition will do no more to the avoiding of them, than a sick man's turning himself from one side of the bed to another; during his turning, he forgets his pain by striving to move, being laid down again, he finds his condition the same as before.

This is the first thing, we are under various judgments, from which by ourselves there is no deliverance.

Secondly, The second thing here express'd, is the procuring cause of these various judgments, set down, *ver. 4. Because of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah King of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.*

The sins of *Manasseh* filled the *Epha* of *Judah's* wickedness, and caused the talent of lead to be laid on the mouth thereof^g. Oftentimes in the relation of his story doth the Holy Ghost emphatically express this, that *for his sin Judah should surely be destroyed*, 2 Kings xxi. 11. Yea when they had a little reviving under *Josiah*, and the bowels of the Lord began to work in compassion towards them; yet as it were remembring the provocation of this *Manasseh*, he recalls his thoughts of mercy, 2 Kings xxiii. 26, 27. The disposing of divine and humane things, is oftentimes very opposite^h. God himself proceeds with them in a diverse dispensation. In the spiritual body the members offend, and the head is punished: *The iniquity of us all did meet on him*, Isa. liii. In the civil politic body the head offends, and the members rue it: *Manasseh* sins, and *Judah* must go captive.

Three things present themselves for the vindication of the equity of God's righteous judgments, in the recompensing the sins of the King upon the people.

1. The concurrence and influence of the peoples power into their rule and government: they that set him up, may justly be called to answer for his miscarriage. The Lord himself had before made the sole bottom of that political administration to be their own wills: *If thou wilt have a King after the manner of the nations*, Deut. xvii. 14. 1 Sam. viii. 7. Though for particulars, himself (according to his su-

^e Isa. li. 20.

^f Exod. x. 17.

^g Zech. v. 7, 8.

^h *Est quadam amulatio divina rei, & humane*, Tertul. Ap.

preme sovereignty) placed in many, by peculiar exemption, otherwise his providence was served by their plenary consent, or by such dispensation of things as you have related, 1 Kings xvi. 21, 22. *Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts, half of the people followed Tibni, the son of Ginath, to make him King; and half followed Omri: but the people that followed Omri, prevailed against the people that followed Tibni; so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.* Now they who place men in authority to be God's vicegerents, do undertake to God for their deportment in that authority, and therefore may justly bear the sad effects of their sinful miscarriages.

2. Because for fear of *Manasseh's* cruelty, or to flatter him in his tyranny for their own advantage, the greatest part of the people had apostatized from the ways and worship of *Hezekiah*, to comply with him in his sin. As at another time *they willingly walked after the commandment*, Hos. v. 11. And this is plainly exprest, 2 Kings xxi. 9. *Manasseh seduced the people to do more evil than the nations.* When Kings turn seducers, they seldom want good store of followers. Now if *the blind lead the blind, both will, and both justly may, fall into the ditch.* When Kings command unrighteous things, and people suit them with willing compliance, none doubts but the destruction of them both is just and righteous. See verse 6 of this Chapter.

3. Because the people, by virtue of their retained sovereignty, did not restrain him in his provoking ways. So *Zwinglius*, Artic. 42. *Qui non vetat, cum potest, jubet.* When *Saul* would have put *Jonathan* to death, the people would not suffer him so to do, but delivered *Jonathan* that he died not, 1 Sam. xiv. When *David* purposed the reducing of the ark, his speech to the people was: *If it please you, let us send abroad to our brethren every where, that they may assemble themselves to us; and all the congregation said, that they would do so, because the thing was right in their eyes,* 2 Chron. xiii. 2. So they bargain with *Rehoboam* about their subjection, upon condition of a moderate rule, 1 Kings xii. By virtue of which power also they delivered *Jeremiah* from the prophets and priests that would have put him to death, Jer. xxvi. 16. And on this ground might they justly feed on the fruit of their own neglected duty. See *Bilson of Obed.* part 3. page 271.

Be it thus, or otherwise, by what way soever the people had their interest therein, certain it is, that for the sins of *Manasseh*, one way or other, made their own, they were destroyed. And therefore these things being written for our example, it cannot but be of great concernment to us, to know what were those sins which wrapt up the people of God in irrevocable destruction. Now these the Holy Ghost fully manifesteth in the story of the life and reign of this *Manasseh*, and they may all be reduced unto two chief heads.

(1.) False worship or superstition: *He built high places, made altars for Baal, and a grove as did Ahab,* 2 Kings xxv. 2.

(2.) Cruelty: *He shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem with blood from one end of it to another,* ver. 16.

Whether this cruelty be to be ascribed to his tyranny in civil affairs, and so the blood shed is called innocent, because not of malefactors; or to his persecution, in subordination to his false worship instituted as before (as the Pope and his adherents have devoured whole nations *in ordine ad spiritualia*) is not apparent: but this is from hence and other places most evident; that superstition and persecution, will-worship and tyranny, are inseparable concomitants¹.

Nebuchadnezzar sets up his great image, and the next news you hear, *the saints are in the furnace*, Dan. iii. 20. You seldom see a fabrick of humane invented worship, but either the foundation or top-stone is laid in the blood of God's people. The wisdom (religion, or way of worship) that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy, James iii. 17. when the other is earthly, sensual, devilish, bringing along envying, strife, contention, and every evil work, ver. 16. Persecution and blood is the genuine product of all invented worship. I might from hence name, and pursue other observations, but I shall only name one, and proceed.

¹ See the Appendix at the end of this Sermon.

Observ. When false worship with injustice by cruelty have possessed the governors of a nation, and wrapt in the consent of the greatest part of the people, who have been acquainted with the mind of God; that people and nation, without unpresumed mercy, is obnoxious to remediless ruin.

Those two are the bell and dragon, that, what by their actings, what by their deservings, have swallowed that ocean of blood, which hath flowed from the veins of millions slain upon the face of the earth. Give me the number of the witnesses of Jesus, whose souls under the altar cry for revenge against their false worshipping murderers^k; and the tale of them, whose lives have been sacrificed to the insatiable ambition and tyranny of blood thirsty potentates, with the issues of God's just vengeance on the sons of men, for compliance in these two things; and you will have gathered in the whole harvest of blood, leaving but a few stragling gleanings upon other occasions. And if these things have been found in *England*, and the present administration with sincere humiliation do not run cross to unravel this close woven web of destruction, all thoughts of recovery will quickly be too late. And thus far, sin and providence drive on a parallel.

Thirdly, The inevitableness of the desolation threatened, and the inexorableness of God in the execution of it, *ver. 1.* is the third thing considerable: *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people.*

Should I insist upon this, it would draw me out unto Scripture evidences, of a nation's travelling in sin, beyond the line of God's patience, and so not to be exempted from ruin: but instead thereof I shall make it a part of my daily supplications, that they may be to our enemies, if God's enemies, and the interpretation of them to those that hate us.

In brief, the words contain an impossible supposition, and yet a negation of the thing for whose sake it is supposed. *Moses* and *Samuel* were men, who in the days of their flesh offered up strong supplications, and averted many imminent judgments from a sinful people. As if the Lord should say: All that I can do in such a case as this, I would grant at the intercession of *Moses* and *Samuel*, or others interceding in their spirit and zeal; but now the state of things is come to that pass, the time of treaty being expired, the black flag hung out, and the *decree having brought forth*, *Zeph. ii. 2.* that upon their utmost entreaty it cannot, it shall not be reversed.

Observ. There is a time when sin grows ripe for ruin: *For three transgressions, and for four the Lord will not turn away the iniquity of a people*, *Amos i. 9.*

When the sin of the *Amorites* hath filled the cup of vengeance, they must drink it, *Gen. xv. 16.* *England* under several administrations of civil government hath fallen twice, yea thrice into nation destroying sins. Providence hath once more given it another bottom; if you should stumble (which the Lord avert) at the same block of impiety and cruelty, there is not another sifting to be made, to reserve any grains from the ground. I doubt not but our three transgressions and four will end in total desolation; the Lord be your guide, poor *England* lieth at stake.

Observ. The greatest difficulty that lieth in bringing of total destruction upon a sinful people is in the interposition of *Moses* and *Samuel*.

If *Moses* would but have stood out of the gap, and let the Almighty go, he had broken in upon the whole host of *Israel*, *Exod. xxxii. 9, 10.* And let it by the way be observed of the spirit of *Samuel*, that when the people of God were most exorbitant, he crieth: *As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you*, *1 Sam. xii. 23.* Scarce answered by those, who, if their interest be not served, or at best their reason satisfied, will scarce yield a prayer for, yea pour out curses against their choicest deliverers: the Lord lay it not to their charge. For us, seeing that praying deliverers are more prevalent than fighting deliverers (it is tho' *Moses* and *Samuel*, not *Gideon* and *Sampson*, stood before me) as some decay, let us gather strength in the Lord, that he may have never the more rest for their giving over, until he establish mount *Zion* a praise in the earth.

Fourthly, Come we now to the fourth thing in this *Chapter*, the prophet's state and condition, with the frame and deportment of his heart and spirit under these dispensations; and here we find him expressing two things of himself.

^k Rev. vi. 9, 10.

1. What he found from others, *ver. 10.*

2. What he wrestled withal in his own spirit, *ver. 15, 16, 17, 18.*

1. What he found from others. He telleth you, it was cursing and reproach, &c. *I have neither lent on usury, nor have men lent to me on usury, yet every one of them doth curse me, ver. 10.*

Now this return may be considered two ways.

(1.) In itself: *Every one* (saith he) *of this people curse me.*

(2.) In reference to his deportment: *I have neither borrowed nor lent on usury, yet they curse me.*

(1.) From the first observe:

Observ. Instruments of God's greatest works and glory are oftentimes the chiefest objects of a professing peoples curses and revenges.

The return which God's labourers meet withal in this generation, is in the number of those things, whereof there is none new under the sun. Men that under God deliver a kingdom, may have the kingdom's curses for their pains.

When *Moses* had brought the people of *Israel* out of bondage, by that wonderful and unparallel'd deliverance, being forced to appear with the Lord for the destruction of *Corah* and his associates, who would have seduced the congregation to its utter ruin, he receives at length this reward of all his travel, labour, and pains: *all the congregations gathered themselves against him and Aaron, laying murder and sedition to their charge, telling them they had killed the people of the Lord, Num. xvi. 41, 42.* a goodly reward for all their travels. If God's works do not suit with the lusts, prejudices, and interests of men, they will labour to give his instruments the Devil's ways. Let not upright hearts sink, because they meet with thankless men. *Bona agere, & mala pati, Christianorum est.* A man may have the blessing of God, and the curse of a professing people at the same time. *Behold I and the children whom God hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel, Isa. viii. 15.* *Cum ab hominibus damnatur, à Deo absolvimur*¹. Man's condemnation, and God's absolution do not seldom meet upon the same persons, for the same things. If you labour to do the work of the Lord, pray think it not strange, if among men curses be your reward, and detestation your wages.

(2.) In reference to the prophet's deportment: *He had neither lent, nor had any lent to him upon usury.* He was free from blame among them, had no dealings with them, in those things which are usually attended with reproaches; as he shews by an instance in usury, a thing that a long time hath heard very ill.

Observ. Men every way blameless, and to be embraced in their own ways, are oftentimes abhorred and laden with curses, for following the Lord in his ways.

Bonus vir Cajus Sejus, sed malus quia Christianus. What precious men should many be, would they let go the work of God in this generation? No advantage against them but *in the matter of their God*, and that is enough to have them to the lions, *Dan. vi. 5.* He that might be honoured for compassing the ends suiting his own worldly interest, and will chearfully undergo dishonour for going beyond, to suit the design of God, hath surely some impression upon his spirit that is from above.

2. You have the prophet's deportment, and the frame of his spirit during those transactions between the Lord and that sinful people. And this he holds out in many pathetical complaints, to be fainting, decaying, perplexed, weary of his burden, not knowing how to ease himself, as you may see at large, *ver. 15, 16, 17, 18.*

Observ. In dark and difficult dispensations of providence, God's choicest servants are oftentimes ready to faint under the burden of them.

How weary was *David* when he cried out in such a condition, *O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest, Psal. lv. 6.* Long had he waited for a desired issue of his perplexed state, and had perhaps oftentimes been frustrated of his hope of drawing to a period of his miseries, and now finding one disappointment to follow on the neck of another, he is weary and cries: What nothing but this trouble and confusion still? *Oh that I had wings like a dove! a ship to sail to a foreign nation (or the like) there to be at peace.* In the like streight

¹ Tertul. Apol.

another time, see what a miserable conclusion he draws of all his being exercised under the hand of God, *Psal. lxxiii. 13. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.* And again, *Psal. cxvi. 11.* he saith in the perturbation of his mind, *All men are liars:* that all the promises, all the encouragements, which in his way he had received from God, should fail of their accomplishment.

It is not with them, as it was with that wicked King of *Israel*, who being disappointed of peace and deliverance in his own time, cries out, *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait upon him any longer?* *2 Kings xvi. 33.* The season of deliverance suited not his expectation; therefore he quite throweth off the Lord, and his protection. Not unlike many among ourselves, whose desires and expectations being not satisfied in the closing of our distractions, according to the way which themselves had framed for the Lord to walk in, are ready to cast off his cause, his protection, to comply with the enemies of his name, *Si Deus homini non placuerit, Deus non erit.* But it may be observed, that deliverance came not to that people until *Jehoram* was weary of waiting, and then instantly God gives it in. When God hath tired the patience of corrupted men, he will speak peace to them that wait for him. Thus is it not with the saints of God, only being perplexed in their spirits, dark in their apprehensions, and fainting in their strength, they break out oft-times into passionate complaints (as *Jeremy* for a cottage in the wilderness) but yet for the main holding firm to the Lord.

And the reasons of this quailing are,

(1.) The weakness of faith, when the methods of God's proceedings are unfathomable to our apprehensions. While men see the paths wherein the Lord walketh, they can follow him through some difficulties; but when that is hid from them, though providence so shut up all other ways, that it is impossible God should be in them, yet if they cannot discern (so proud are they) how he goeth in that wherein he is, they are ready to faint and give over. God is pleased sometimes to make darkness his pavilion and his secret place, *A fire devours before him, and it is very tempestuous round about him, Psal. 1. 3.* When once God is attended with fire, darkness, and tempest, because we cannot so easily see him, we are ready to leave him. Now this the Lord usually doth in the execution of his judgments: *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a great deep, Psal. xxxvi. 6.* His righteousness, his kindness is like a great mountain that is easy to be seen, a man cannot overlook it, unless he wilfully shut his eyes; but his judgments are like the great deep. Who can look into the bottom of the sea, or know what is done in the depths thereof? God's works in their accomplishment are oftentimes so unsuited to the reasons and apprehensions of men, that very many who have been strong in desires, and great in expectation of them, upon their bringing forth to light, have quite rejected and opposed them as none of his, because distant from what they had framed to themselves. It is evident from the Gospel, that the people of the *Jews* were full of expectation and longing for the great work of the coming of the *Messias*, just at the season wherein he came, yet being come, because not accommodated to their pre-imaginings, they rejected him, *as having neither form nor comeliness in him to be desired, Isa. liii. 2.* And the prophet *Amos* telleth many, *who desired the day of the Lord, that, that day should be darkness to them and not light, Amos v. 18, 20.* So in every generation many desires of the accomplishment of God's work are shaken off from any share therein, by finding it unsuited to their reasons and expectations.

Now when the Lord is pleased thus to walk in darkness, many being not able to trace him in his dispensations, are ready to lie down and sink under the burden. *David* seems to profess, that he had nothing at such a time to uphold him but this, that God must be there, or no where. *I had said (saith he) that it was in vain to walk as I do, but that I should have condemned the generation of thy children, Psal. lxxiii. 15.* And truly God never leaves us without so much light, but that we may see clearly where he is not, and so by recounting particulars we may be rolled where he is, though his goings there be not so clear. Ask if God be in the counsels of men who seek themselves, and in the ways of those who make it their design to ruin the generation of the just. If you find him there, seek no farther; if

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not,

not, let that give you light to discern where he makes his abode, that you turn not aside to the flocks of others.

(2.) A reducing the works of providence to inbred rules of their own. But this I cannot pursue.

Be tender toward fainters in difficult seasons. If they leave waiting on the Lord, because the evil is of him; if they cast in their lot with the portion of the ungodly, they will in the end perish in their gainfaying: but as for such, as what for want of light, what for want of faith, sit down and sigh in darkness, be not too hasty in laying farther burdens on them. When first the confederacy was entered into, by the protestant Princes in Germany, against Charles the Vth, Luther himself for a season was bewildered, and knew not what to do, until being instructed in the fundamental laws of the empire, he sat down fully in that undertaking, though the Lord gave it not the desired issue. Our Saviour Christ asks, *if, when he comes, he shall find faith on the earth*, Luke xviii. 8. It is his coming with the spirit of judgment and burning, a day of trial and visitation, he there speaks of. Now what faith shall he want which will not be found in that day? Not the faith of adherence to himself for spiritual life and justification, but of actual closing with him in the things he then doth, that shall be rare, many shall be staggered, and faint in that day.

And thus by the several heads of this Chapter, have I led you through the very state and condition of this nation at this time.

First, Variety of judgments are threatened to us, and incumbent on us, as in the first part. Secondly, Of these, false worship, superstition, tyranny, and cruelty lie in the bottom, as their procuring causes, which is the second. Thirdly, These, if renewed under your hand, will certainly bring inevitable ruin upon the whole nation, which is the third. Fourthly, All which, make many precious hearts, what for want of light, what for want of faith, to fail, and cry out, for *the wings of a dove*, which is the fourth.

Fifthly, I come in the fifth place to God's direction to you for the future, in this state and condition, which being spread in diverse verses, as the Lord gives it to the prophet, I shall meddle with no more of it, than is contained in the words, which at our entrance I read unto you: *Let them return &c.*

In the words observe four things,

I. God's direction to the prophet, and in him to all that do his work in such a season as this described: *Let them return to thee, return not thou to them.*

II. Their assistance and supportment in pursuance of that direction: *I will make thee to this people a brazen fenced wall.*

III. The opposition, with its success and issue, which in that way they should meet withal: *They shall fight against thee, and shall not prevail.*

IV. Their consolation and success from the presence of the Lord: *For I am with thee to deliver thee, &c.*

I. There is God's direction.

Many difficulties in this troublesome season was the prophet intricated withal. The people would not be prevailed with to come up to the mind of God; they continuing in their stubbornness, the Lord would not be prevailed with to avert the threatened desolation. What now shall he do? To stand out against the bulk of the people suits not his earthly interest; to couple with them answers not the discharge of his office; to wait upon them any longer is fruitless; to give up himself to their ways comfortless: hence his complaints, hence his moanings: better lie down and sink under the burden, than always to swim against the stream of an unreformable multitude. In this streight the Lord comes in with his direction: *Let them return unto thee, &c.* Keep thy station, perform thy duty, comply not with the children of backsliding. But whatever be the issue, if there be any closing wrought, let it be by working them off from their ways of folly. All condescension on thy part, where the work of God is to be done, is in opposition to him; if they return, embrace them freely; if not, do thy duty constantly.

That which is spoken immediately to the prophet, I shall hold out to all, acting in the name and authority of God, in this general proposition.

Observ. Plausible compliances of men in authority, with those against whom they are employed, are treacherous contrivances against the God of heaven, by whom they are employed.

If God be so provoked, that he curseth him, who doth his work negligently, what is he by them that do it treacherously? when he gives a sword into the hands of men, and they thrust it into his own bowels, his glory and honour, those things so dear to him? He that is entrusted with it, and dares not do justice on every one, that dares do injustice, is afraid of the creature, but makes very bold with the Creator. *Prov. xxv. 2. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but it is the glory of a King to find out a matter.* That which God aimeth to be glorious in, to manifest his attributes by, is the concealing and covering our iniquities in Christ; but if the magistrate will have glory, if he will not bring upon himself dishonour by dishonouring God, he is to search and find out the transgressions, with whose cognizance he is entrusted, and to give unto them condign retribution. If the Lord curse them, *Who come not forth to his help against the mighty,* Judg. v. 23. What is their due, who being called forth by him, do yet help the mighty against him? For a man to take part with the kingdom's enemies is no small crime; but for a commission officer to run from them by whom he is commissioned, to take part with the adversary, is death without mercy. Yet have not some in our days arrived at that stupendous impudence, that when as private persons they have declaimed against the enemies of the nation, and by that means got themselves into authority, they have made use of that authority to comply with, and uphold those, by an opposition to whom they got into their authority? Which is no less than an atheistical attempt to personate the Almighty, unto such iniquities as without his appearance they dare not own. But *he that justifieth the wicked, and condemneth the just, are both an abomination to the Lord,* *Prov. xvii. 15.* and not only to the Lord, but to good men also: *He that saith to the wicked, thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him,* *Prov. xxiv. 24.*

I speak only as to the general (for me, let all particulars find mercy) with a sad remembrance of the late workings of things amongst us, with those vile, sordid compliances which grew upon the spirits of magistrates and ministers with those, whose garments were dined with the blood of *God's saints and precious ones*, as formerly they were called, for now these names are become terms of reproach. And would this complying went alone, but pretences and accusations must be found out against such as follow with them. When they begin to call darkness light, they will ere long call light darkness: by which means our eyes have seen men of their own accord laying down the weapons wherewith at first they fought against opposers, and taking up them which were used against themselves, as hath happened more than once, to penmen both in our own, and our neighbour nation.

Now this revolting from principles of religion and righteousness, to a compliance with any sinful way or person, is a treacherous opposition to the God of heaven. For,

1. It cannot be done but by preferring the creature before the Creator, especially in those things which are the proximate causes of deviation.

Two principal causes I have observed of this crooked walking.

- (1.) Fear.
- (2.) That desire of perishing things, which hath a mixture of covetousness and ambition.

The *first* maketh men wary, what they do against men; the *other* maketh them weary of doing any thing for God, as whereby their sordid ends are not like to be accomplished.

(1.) Fear. When once magistrates begin to listen after *quid sequitur*, and so to withdraw from doing good, for fear of suffering evil, paths of wickedness are quickly returned unto, and the authority of God despised. *Let this man go, and take heed of Caesar,* *John xix. 12.* did more prevail on *Pilate's* treacherous heart, than all the other clamours of the *Jews*. Yea, was not the whole Sanhedrim swayed to desperate villany, *for fear the Romans should come and take away their kingdom,* *Joh. xi. 48?* When men begin once to distrust that God will leave them in the briars, to wrestle

it out themselves (for unbelief lieth at the bottom of carnal fear) they quickly turn themselves to contrivances of their own, for their own safety, their own prosperity, which commonly is by obliging those unto them by compliances, in an opposition to whom they might oblige the Almighty to their assistance: surely they conclude he wants either truth, or power to support them in his employment.

If a Prince should send an ambassador to a foreign state to treat about peace, or to denounce war; who, when he comes there, distrusting his master's power to make good his undertaking, should comply and wind up his interest with them to whom he was sent, suffering his sovereign's errand to fall to the ground, would he not be esteemed as arrant a traitor as ever liv'd? And yet tho' this be clipt coin among men, it is put upon the Lord every day as current.

From this principle of carnal fear and unbelief, *trembling for a man that shall die, and the son of man that shall be as grass, forgetting the Lord our Maker*, Isa. li. 12. are all those prudential follies, which exercise the minds of most men in authority, making them, especially in times of difficulties, to regulate and square all their proceedings by what suits their own safety and particular interests, counselling, advising, working for themselves, quite forgetting by whom they are entrusted, and whose business they should do.

(2.) A desire of perishing things tempered with covetousness and ambition. Hence was the sparing of the fat cattle, and of *Agag* by *Saul*, 1 Sam. xv.

When those two qualifications close on any, they are diametrically opposed to that frame which of God is required in them, *viz. That they should be men fearing God, and hating covetousness*. The first will go far, being only a contrivance for safety; but if this latter take hold of any, being a consultation to exalt themselves, it quickly carrieth them beyond all bounds whatsoever. The Lord grant, that hereafter there may be no such complaints in this nation, or may be causeless, as have been heretofore, *viz. That we have poured out our prayers, jeopardd our lives, wasted our estates, spent our blood, to serve the lusts, and compass the designs of ambitious ungodly men*.

The many ways whereby these things intrench upon the spirits of men, to bias them from the paths of the Lord, I shall not insist upon, it is enough that I have touched upon the obvious causes of deviation, and manifested them to be treacheries against the God of all authority.

Use. Be exhorted to beware of relapses, with all their causes and inducements; and to be constant to the way of righteousness, and this I shall hold out unto you in two particulars.

1. Labour to recover others, even all that were ever distinguished and called by the name of the Lord, from their late fearful returning to sinful compliances with the enemies of God and the nation. I speak not of mens persons, but of their ways. For three years this people have been eminently sick of the folly of back-sliding, and without some special cordial are like to perish in it, as far as I know.

Look upon the estate of this people, as they were differenced seven years ago, so for some continuance, and as they are now, and you shall find in how many things we have returned to others, and not one instance to be given of their return to us. That this may be clear, take some particulars.

(1.) In words and expressions, those are *index animi*. Turn them over, and you may find what is in the whole heart: *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*. Now is not that language, are not those very expressions which filled the mouths of the common adversaries only, grown also terms of reproach upon the tongues of men, that suffered sometimes under them, and counted it their honour so to do? Hence that common exprobation: *A parliament of saints, an army of saints*, and such like derisions of God's ways, now plentiful with them, who sat sometimes, and *took sweet counsel with us*. Ah! had it not been more for the honour of God, that we had kept our station, until others had come to us, so to have exalted the name and profession of the Gospel; than that we should so return to them, as to join with them in making the paths of Christ a reproach? Had it not been better for us with *Judah* to continue *ruling with God, and to be faithful with the saints*, Hos. xi. 12. than to *stand in the congregation of the mockers, and to sit in the seat of the scornful*? What shall we say, when the saints of God are as *signs and wonders to be spoken against in Israel*, Isa. viii. 18. Oh, that men would

would remember how they have left their first station; when themselves use those reproaches unto others, which for the same cause themselves formerly bare with comfort! It is bitterness to consider, how the Gospel is scandalized by this woful return of ministers and people, by casting scriptural expressions by way of scorn, on those, with whom they were sometimes in the like kind companions of contempt. Surely in this we are returned to them, and not they to us.

(2.) In actions, and those,

[1.] Of religion, not only in opinion, but practice also, are we here under a vile return. We are become the lions, and the very same thoughts entertained by us against others, as were exercised towards ourselves. Are not others as unworthy to live upon their native soil in our judgments, as we ourselves in the judgments of them formerly over us? Are not groans for liberty, by the warmth of favour, in a few years hatched into attempts for tyranny? And for practice, what hold hath former superstition in observing days and times, laid hold upon the many of the people again? Witness the late solemn superstition, and many things of the like nature.

[2.] For civil things, the closing of so many, formerly otherwise engaged, with the adverse party in the late rebellion, with the luke-warm deportment of others at the same time, is a sufficient demonstration of it. And may not the Lord justly complain of all this? *What iniquity have you seen in me, or my ways, that you are gone far from me, and walked after vanity, and are become vain, Jer. ii. 4? Why have you changed your glory, for that which doth not profit, ver. 11? Have I been a dry heath, or a barren wilderness to you?* Oh, that men should find no more sweetness in following the lamb under wonderful protections, but that they should thus turn aside into every wilderness! What indignity is this to the ways of God? I could give you many reasons of it; but I have done, what I intended, a little hinted, that we are a returning people, that so you might be exhorted to help for a recovery. And how shall that be?

2. By your own keeping close to the paths of righteousness. If you return not, others will look about again. This breach, this evil is of you, within your own walls, was the fountain of our backsliding. Would you be the repairers of breaches, the restorers of paths for men to walk in? Do these two things.

(1.) Turn not to the ways of such as the Lord hath blasted under your eyes. And these may be referred to three heads.

[1.] Oppression. [2.] Self-seeking. [3.] Contrivances for persecution.

[1.] Oppression, how detestable a crime it is in the eyes of the Almighty, what effects it hath upon men, *making wise men mad*, Eccles. vii. 7. how frequently it closeth in the calamitous ruin of the oppressors themselves, are things known to all. Whether it hath not been exercised in this nation, both in general by unnecessary impositions, and in particular by unwarrantable pressures, let the mournful cries of all sorts of people testify. Should you now return to such ways as these, would not the anger of the Lord smoke against you? Make it, I beseech you, your design to relieve the whole, by all means possible, and to relieve particulars, yea even of the adverse party where too much overborn. Oh, let it be considered by you, that it be not considered upon you. I know the things you are necessitated to are not to be supported by the air. It is only what is unnecessary as to you, or insupportable as to others, that requires your speedy reforming; that so it may be said of you as of *Nehemiah*, chap. v. 14, 15. And for particulars (pray pardon my folly and boldness) I heartily desire a *Committee* of your *Honourable House* might sit once a week to relieve poor men, that have been oppressed by men, sometimes enjoying parliamentary authority.

[2.] Self-seeking: when men can be content to lay a nation low, that they may set up themselves upon the heaps and ruins thereof. Have not some sought to advance themselves under that power, which with the lives and blood of the people they have opposed, seeming to be troubled at former things, not because they were done, but because they were not done by them? But innocent blood will be found a tottering foundation for men to build their honours, greatness, and preferments upon. O return not in this unto any. If men serve themselves of the nation, they must expect that the nation will serve itself upon them. The best security you can possibly have, that the people will perform their duty in obedience, is the witness of your own consciences, that you have discharged your duty towards them, in seek-

ing their good, by your own trouble, and not your own advantages in their trouble. I doubt not but that in this, your practice makes the admonition a commendation, otherwise the word spoken will certainly witness against you.

[3.] Contrivances for persecution. How were the hearts of all men hardened like the nether mill-stone, and their thoughts did grind blood and revenge against their brethren? What colours, what pretences had men invented to prepare a way for the rolling of their garments in the tears, yea blood of Christians? The Lord so keep your spirits from a compliance herein, that withal the bow be not too much bent on the other side, which is not impossible.

Be there a backsliding upon your spirit to these, or such like things as these, the Lord will walk contrary to you, and were you *as the signet upon his hand*, he would pluck you off.

(2.) Return not to the open enemies of our peace. I could here enlarge myself, to support your spirits in the work mentioned, *Job* xxix. 14, 15. but I must go on to the following parts of my text: and therefore,

II. I pass from the direction given, to the supportment and assistance promised: *I will make thee to this people a brazen and a fenced wall.*

An implied objection, which the prophet might put in, upon his charge to keep so close to the rule of righteousness, is here removed. If I must thus abide by it, to execute whatsoever the Lord calls me out unto, not shrinking, nor staggering at the greatest undertakings, what will become of me in the issue? Will it not be destructive to stand out against a confirmed people? No, saith the Lord, it shall not be, *I will make thee, &c.*

Observ. God will certainly give in prevailing strength, and unconquerable defence unto persons constantly discharging the duties of righteousness, especially when undertaken in times of difficulty and opposition.

The like engagement to this you have made to *Ezekiel*, iii. 8, 9. Neither was it so to the prophets alone, but to magistrates also. When *Joshua* undertook the regency of *Israel* in a difficult time, he takes off his fear and diffidence with this very encouragement, *Josh.* i. 5. He saith, he will make them a wall, the best defence against opposition, and that not a weak tottering wall, that might easily be cast down, but a brazen wall, that must needs be impregnable. What engines can possibly prevail against a wall of brass? And to make it more secure, this brazen wall shall be fenced with all manner of fortifications, and ammunition; so that the veriest coward in the world, being behind such a wall, may without dread or terror apply himself to that which he findeth to do. God will so secure the instruments of his glory against a backsliding people, in holding up the ways of his truth and righteousness, that all attempts against them shall be vain, and the most timorous spirit may be secure, provided he go not out of the Lord's way: for if they be found beyond the line, the brazen wall, they may easily be surprized. And indeed, who but a fool would run from the shelter of a brazen wall, to hide himself in a little stubble? And yet so do all, who run to their own wisdom, from the most hazardous engagement that any of the ways of God can possibly lead them unto. It is a sure word, and for ever to be rested upon, which the Lord gives in to *Asa*, 2 *Chron.* xv. 2. *The Lord is with you while ye be with him.* An unbiass'd magistracy shall never want God's continued presence. Very *Jeroboam* himself receives a promise, upon condition of close walking with God in righteous administrations, of having *an house built him like the house of David*, 1 *Kings* xi. 38. What a wall was God to *Moses* in that great undertaking, of being instrumental for the delivery of *Israel* from a bondage and slavery of four hundred years continuance? *Pharaoh* was against him, whom he had deprived of his sovereignty and dominion over the people. And what a provocation the depriving of sovereignty is unto potentates, needs no demonstration: to the corruption of nature which inclines to heights and exaltations, in imitation of the fountain whence it flows, they have also the corruption of state and condition, which hath always inclined to absoluteness and tyranny. All *Egypt* was against him, as being by him visibly destroyed, wasted, spoiled, robbed, and at length smitten in the apple of the eye, by the loss of their first-born. And if this be not enough, that the King and people whom he opposed, were his enemies; the very people, for whose sakes he set himself to oppose the others, they also rise up against him, yea, seek to destroy him. One time they *appeal to God for justice against him*, *Exod.* v. 21.

Exod. v. 21. *The Lord look upon you and judge.* They appeal to the righteous God to witness, that he had not fulfilled what he promised them, to wit, liberty, safety, and freedom from oppression, but that rather by his means their burdens were increased: and in this they were so confident (like some amongst us) that they appealed unto God for the equity of their complaints. Afterward being reduced to a strait, such as they could not see how possibly they should be extricated from, without utter ruin (like our present condition in the apprehension of some) they cry out upon him for the whole design of bringing them into the wilderness, and affirm positively, that though they had perished in their former slavery, it had been better for them, than to have followed him in this new and dangerous engagement, *Exod. xiv. 11, 12, 13.* That generation being, as *Calvin* observes ^a, so inured to bondage, that they were altogether unfit to bear with the workings and pangs of their approaching liberty. Afterwards, do they want drink? *Moses* is the cause. Do they want meat? this *Moses* would starve them, *Exod. xv. 24.* and *xvi. 7.* He could not let them alone by the fleshpots of *Egypt*; for this they are ready to stone him, *Exod. xvii. 3.* At this day, have we too much rain? or too short a harvest? it is laid on the shoulders of the present government. It was no otherwise of old. At length this people came to that height, as being frightened by the opposition they heard of, and framed to themselves in that place whither *Moses* would carry them, they presently enter into a conspiracy and revolt, consulting to cast off his government, and choose new commanders, and with a violent hand to return to their former condition, *Numb. xiv. 4.* an attempt as frequent as fruitless among ourselves. When this would not do, at length, upon the occasion of taking off *Corah* and his company, they assemble themselves together, and lay (not imprisonment, but) murder to his charge, and *that of the people of the Lord*, *Numb. xvi. 41.* Now what was the issue of all those oppositions? What effect had they? How did the power of *Pharaoh*, the revenge of *Egypt*, the backsliding of *Israel* prevail? Why God made this one *Moses* a fenced brazen wall to them all, he was never in the least measure prevailed against; so long as he was with God, God was with him, no matter who was against him.

One thing only would I commend to your considerations, *viz.* That this *Moses*, thus preserved, thus delivered, thus protected, falling into one deviation, in one thing, from close following the Lord, was taken off from enjoying the closure and fruit of all his labour, *Numb. xx. 12.* Otherwise he followed the Lord in a difficult season, and did not want unconquerable supportment. Take heed of the smallest turning aside from God. Oh, lose not the fruit of all your labour for self, for a lust, or any thing that may turn you aside.

Now the Lord will do this,

1. Because of his own engagement.

2. For our encouragement.

1. Because of his own engagement. And that is twofold.

(1.) Of truth and fidelity.

(2.) Of honour and glory.

(1.) His truth and veracity is engaged in it. *Those that honour him, he will honour*, 1 Sam. ii. 30. If men honour him with obedience, he will honour them with preservation. *He will be with them; while they are with him*, 2 Chron. xv. 2. While they are with him in constancy of duty, he will be with them to keep them in safety, *He will never leave them nor forsake them*, Josh. i. 5. *No weapon that is framed against them shall prosper*, Isa. liv. 17. Now God is never *as the waters that fail* to any, that upon his engagements wait for him; he will not shame the faces of them that put their trust in him. Why should our unbelieving spirits charge that upon the God of truth, which we dare not impute to a man that is a worm, a liar? Will a man fail in his engagement unto him, who upon that engagement undertakes a difficult employment for his sake? The truth is, it is either want of sincerity in our working, or want of faith in dependance, that makes us at any time come short of the utmost tittle, that is in any of the Lord's engagements.

[1.] We want sincerity, and do the Lord's work, but with our own aims and ends, like *Jehu*: no wonder, if we be left to ourselves for our wages and defence.

^a In Num. Cap. 4.

[2.] We want faith also in the Lord's work, turn to our own counsels for supportment: no marvel, if we come short of assistance. *If we will not believe, we shall not be established.*

Look to sincerity in working, and faith in dependance, God's truth and fidelity will carry him out to give you unconquerable supportment: deflexion from these will be your destruction. You, that are working on a new bottom, work also on new principles; put not new wine into old bottles, new designs into old hearts.

(2.) He is engaged in point of honour. If they miscarry in his way, what will he do for his great name? Yea so tender is the Lord herein of his glory, that when he hath been exceedingly provoked to remove men out of his presence, yet because they have been called by his name, and have visibly held forth a following after him, he would not suffer them to be trodden down, lest the enemy should exalt themselves, and say, Where is now their God? They shall not take from him the honour of former deliverances and protections. In such a nation as this, if the Lord now upon manifold provocations should give up parliament, people, army to calamity and ruin, would not the glory of former counsels, successes, deliverances, be utterly lost? would not men say it was not the Lord, but chance that happened to them.

2. For our encouragement. The ways of God are oftentimes attended with so many difficulties, so much opposition, that they must be imbraced merely because his; no other motive in the world can suit them to us. I mean, for such as keep them immixed from their own carnal and corrupt interests. Now because the Lord will not take off the hardship and difficulty of them, lest he should not have the honour of carrying on his work against tumultuating opposition, he secures poor weaklings of comfortable assistance, and answerable success, lest his work should be wholly neglected. It is true, the Lord, as our sovereign Master, may justly require a close labouring in all his ways, without the least sweetening endearments put upon them, only as they are his, whose we are, who hath a dominion over us. But yet, as a tender Father, in which relation he delights to exercise his will towards his own in Christ, *he pitieth our infirmities, knowing that we are but dust*; and therefore to invite us into the dark, into ways laboursome and toilsome to flesh and blood, he gives us in this security, that we shall be as a fenced brazen wall to the opposing sons of men.

Use 1. To discover the vanity and folly of all opposition to men called forth of God to do his work, and walking in his ways, would you not think him mad, that should strike with his fist, and run with his head against a fenced brazen wall to cast it down? Is he like to have any success, but the battering of his flesh, and the beating out of his brains? What do the waves obtain by dashing themselves with noise and dread against a rock, but their own beating to pieces? What prevails a man by shooting his arrows against the sky, but a return upon his own head? Nor is the most powerful opposition to the ways of God like to meet with better success. God looks no otherwise upon opposers, than you would do upon a man attempting to thrust down a fenced brazen wall with his fingers. Therefore it is said, that in their proudest attempts, strongest assaults, deepest counsels, combinations, and associations, *he laughs them to scorn*, derides their folly, contemns their fury, lets them sweat in vain, until their day be come, *Psal. ii.* How birthless in our own, as well as other generations have been their swelling conceptions? What then is it that prevails upon men to break through so many disappointments against the Lord, as they do? doubtless that of *Isa. xxiii. 9. Surely the Lord of hosts hath a purpose to stain the pride of all glory, to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.* God gives up men unto it, that he may leave no earthly glory or honour without pollution or contempt. And therefore hath opposition in our days been turned upon so many hands, that God might leave no glory without contempt: yet with this difference, that if the Lord will own them, he will recover them from their opposition, as have happened of late to the ministry of one, and will happen ere long to the ministry of another nation. When the Lord hath a little stained the pride of their glory, they shall be brought home again by the spirit of judgment and burning; but if he own them not, they shall perish under the opposition. And when it hath been wheeled about on all sorts of men, the end will be.

Use 2.

Use 2. *Be wise now therefore, O ye rulers; be instructed, ye that are judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling, Psal. ii. 10, 11.* See whence your assistance cometh; see where lie the hills of your salvation, and say: *Assur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the works of our hands, ye are our Gods; for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy, Hof. xiv. 3.* It is God alone who is a *sun and a shield: his ways do good to the upright in heart.* Behold, here is a way to encompass England with a brazen wall: let the rulers of it walk in right ways, with upright hearts. Others have been careful to preserve the people to them, and the city to them; oh, be you careful to preserve your God unto you, he alone can make you a fenced wall; if he departs, your wall departs, your shade departs. Give me leave to insist a little on one particular, which I choose out among many others. When God leads out his people to any great things, the angel of his presence is still among them: see at large, *Exod. xxiii. 20, 21, 22.* The angel of the covenant, in whom is the name of God, that hath power of pardoning or retaining transgressions, Jesus Christ, the *angel that redeemeth his out of all their troubles, Gen. xlviii. 16.* he is in the midst of them, and amongst them. And God gives this special caution, if we would have his assistance, that we should beware of him, and obey him, and provoke him not. Would you then have God's assistance continued? Take heed of provoking the angel of his presence: provoke him not by slighting of his ways, provoke him not by contemning his ordinances; if you leave him to deal for himself, he will leave you to shift for yourselves. ° What though his followers are at some difference (the best knowing but in part) about the administration of some things in his kingdom; the envious one having also sown some bitter seeds of persecution, strife, envy, and contention among them? What tho' some poor creatures are captivated by Satan, the prince of pride, to a contempt of all his ordinances, whose souls I hope the Lord will one day free from the snare of the Devil? Yet I pray give me leave (it is no time to contest or dispute it) to bear witness in the behalf of my master to this one truth, that if by your own personal practice and observance, your protection, countenance, authority, laws, you do not assert, maintain, uphold the order of the Gospel, and administration of the ordinances of Christ, notwithstanding the noise and clamours of novel fancies, which like *Jonah's gourd* have sprung up in a night, and will wither in a day; you will be forsaken by the angel of God's presence, and you will become an astonishment to all the inhabitants of the earth. And herein I do not speak as one hesitating, or dubious, but positively assert it, as the known mind of God, and whereof he will not suffer any long to doubt, *Psal. ii. ult.*

Use 3. *Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not, behold your God will come with vengeance, even your God with a recompence, he will come and save you, Isa. xxxv. 3, 4.* Let the most weak and fearful, the fainting heart, the trembling spirit, and the doubting mind know, that full and plenary security, perfect peace attends the upright in the ways of God. You that are in God's way, do God's work, and take this cordial for all your distempers, return not to former provoking ways, and he will make you a *fenced brazen wall.*

And so I come to the third thing, which I proposed to consider.

III. The opposition which men cleaving to the Lord in all his ways shall find, with the issue and success of it: *They shall fight against thee, but shall not prevail.*

The words may be considered either as a prediction depending on God's prescience of what will be; or a commination from his just judgment, of what shall be.

In the first sense the Lord tells the prophet, from the corruption, apostacy, stubbornness of that people, what would come to pass. In the second, what for their sins and provocations, by his just judgment, should come to pass. Time will not allow me to handle the words in both acceptations, wherefore I shall take up the latter only, *viz.* That it is a commination of what shall be for the farther misery of that wretched people, they shall judicially be given up to a fighting against him.

Observ. God oftentimes gives up a sinful people to a fruitless contention, and fighting with their only supporters, and means of deliverance.

° See the Appendix about Toleration.

Jeremiah had laboured with God for them, and with them for God, that if possible, peace being made, they might be delivered, and to consummate their sins, they are given up to fight against him.

I cannot now insist upon particular instances, consult the history of the Church in all ages, you shall find it continually upon all occasions verified. From the *Israelites* opposing *Moses*, to the *Ephramites* contest with *Jephtha*, the rejecting of *Samuel*, and so on to the Kings of the earth, giving their power to the beast to wage war with the *Lamb*, with the inhabitants of the world combining against the witnesses of Christ, is this assertion held out. In following story, no sooner did any plague or judgment break out against the *Roman* empire, but instantly, *Christianos ad leones*, their fury must be spent upon them, who were the only supporters of it from irrecoverable ruin.

Now the Lord doth this,

1. To seal up a sinful people's destruction. *Elis* sons hearkened not, because the Lord would slay them, 1 *Sam.* ii. 25. When God intends ruin to a people, they shall walk in ways that tend thereunto. Now is there a readier way for a man to have a house on his head, than by pulling away the pillars whereby it is supported? If by *Moses* standing in the gap, the fury of the Lord be turned away; certainly if the people contend to remove him, their desolation sleepeth not. When therefore the Lord intends to lay cities waste without inhabitant, and houses without men, to make a land utterly desolate, the way of its accomplishment is by making the hearts of the people fat, and their ears heavy, and shutting their eyes that they should not see, and attend to the means of their recovery, *Isa.* vi. 10, 11. *so gathering in his peace and mercies from a provoking people*, Jer. xvi. 15.

2. To manifest his own power and sovereignty in maintaining a small handful, oftentimes a few single persons, a *Moses*, a *Samuel*, two witnesses against the opposing rage of a hardened multitude. If those who undertake his work and business in their several generations, should have withal the concurrent obedience and assistance of others, whose good is intended, neither would his name be so seen, nor his ways so honoured, as now, when he bears them up against all opposition. Had not the people of this land been given up (many of them) to fight against the deliverers of the nation, and were it not so with them even at this time, how dark would have been the workings of providence, which now by wrestling through all opposition are so conspicuous and clear? When then a people, or any part of a people, have made themselves unworthy of the good things intended to be accomplished by the instruments of righteousness and peace, the Lord will blow upon their waves, that with rage and fury they shall dash themselves against them, whom he will strengthen with the munition of rocks, not to be prevailed against. So that God's glory and their own ruin lie at the bottom of this close working of providence, in giving up a sinful people to a fruitless contending with their own deliverers, if ever they be delivered.

Object. But is not a people's contending with the instruments by whom God worketh amongst them, and for them, a sin and provocation to the eyes of his glory? How then can the Lord be said to give them up unto it?

Ans. Avoiding all scholastical discourses, as unsuited to the work of this day, I shall briefly give in unto you, how this is a sinful thing, yet sinners given up unto it, without the least extenuation of their guilt, or colour for charge on the justice and goodness of God.

(1.) Then to give up men unto a thing in itself sinful, is no more, but so to dispose and order things, that sinners may exercise and draw out their sinful principles in such a way. This that the Lord doth, the Scripture is full of examples, and hath testimonies innumerable. That herein the Holy One of *Israel* is no ways co-partner with the guilt of the sons of men, will appear by observing the difference of these several agents in these four things,

[1.] The principle by which they work.

[2.] The rule by which they proceed.

[3.] The means which they use.

[4.] The end at which they aim.

[1.] The principle of operation in God is his own sovereign will, and good pleasure. *He doth whatever he pleaseth*, *Psal.* cxv. 3. *He saith his purpose shall stand*,
and

and he will do all his pleasure, Isa. xlv. 10. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardneth, Rom. ix. 13. Giving no account of his matters, Job xxxiii. 18. This our Saviour rendereth as the only principle and reason of his hidden operations: *O Father, so it seemed good in thy sight*, Matth. xi. 26. His sovereignty in doing what he will with his own, as the potter with his clay, is the rise of his operations. So that whatever he doth, *who can say unto him, what dost thou*, Job ix. 12? *Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus*, Rom. ix. 20? And hence two things will follow.

1.) That what he doth is just and righteous; for so must all acts of supreme and absolute dominion be.

2.) That he can be author of nothing, but what hath existence and being in itself; for he works as the fountain of beings. This sin hath not. So that though every action, whether good or bad, receives its specification from the working of providence, and to that is their existence, in their several kinds, to be ascribed; yet an evil action, in the evilness of it, depends not upon divine concurrence and influence; for good and evil make not sundry kinds of actions, but only a distinction of a subject in respect of its adjuncts and accidents.

But now the principle of operation in man is nature viciated and corrupted: I say nature, not that he worketh naturally, being a free agent, but that these faculties, will, and understanding, which are the principles of operation, are in nature corrupted, and from thence can nothing flow but evil. *An evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Men do not gather figs from thistles. A bitter fountain sends not forth sweet waters. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* If the fountain be poisoned, can the streams be wholesome? What can you expect of light and truth from a mind possess'd with vanity and darkness? what from a will averted from the chiefest good, and fix'd upon present appearances? what from an heart, the figment of whose imagination is only evil?

[2.] Consider the difference in the rule of operation. Every thing that works hath a rule to work by, this is called a law. In that thing which to man is sinful, God worketh as it is a thing only, man as it is a sinful thing: And how so? Why every one's sin is his aberration from his rule of operation or working. *Ἀμαρτάνειν* is, *aberrare à scopo*: to sin is, not to collime aright at the end proposed: *ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία*, is a most exact definition of it; irregularity is its form, if it may be said to have a form, a privation's form is deformity. Look then in any action, wherein an agent exorbitates from its rule, that is sin. Now what is God's rule in operation? His own infinite will alone: he takes neither motive, rise, nor occasion for any internal acts, from any thing without himself; *he doth whatever he pleaseth*, Psal. cxv. 3. *He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will*, Ephes. i. 11. That is his own law of operation, and the rule of righteousness unto others: working, then agreeably to his own will, which he always must do, he is free from the obliquity of any action. What now is the rule of the sons of men? Why, the revealed will of God: *Revealed things belong to us that we may do them*, Deut. xxix. 29. God's revealed will is the rule of our walking, our working; whatever suits not, answers not this, is evil. Sin is the transgression of the law, 1 Joh. iii. 4. Here then comes in the deformity, the obliquity, the ataxy of any thing; God works, and man worketh; those agents have several rules. God works according to his rule, hence the action is good, as an action; man deviates from his rule, hence it is sinful in respect of its qualifications and adjuncts. Man writes fair letters upon a wet paper, and they run all into one blot; not the skill of the scribe, but the defect in the paper is the cause of the deformity. He that makes a lame horse go, is the cause of his going; but the defect in his joints, is the cause of his going lame. The Sun exhales a steam from the dunghil; the sun is the cause of the exhalation, but the dunghil of the unwholesome savour. The first cause is the proper cause of a thing's being, but the second of its being evil.

[3.] Consider the several operations and actings of God and man: for instance, in a rebellious peoples fighting against their helpers under him.

Now the acts of God herein may be referred to six heads.

1.) A continuance of the creatures being and life: *Upholding him by the word of his power*, Heb. i. 3. when he might take him off in a moment: *Enduring them with*

with much long-suffering, Rom. ix. 22. when he might cut him off, as he did the opposers of *Elijah*, with fire from heaven, 2 Kings i. 12.

2.) A continuance of power of operation to them, when he could make their hands to wither like *Jeroboam's*, when they go about to strike, 1 Kings xiii. 4. or their hearts to die within them like *Nabal's*, when they intend to be churlish, 1 Sam. xxv. 37. But he raiseth them up, or makes them to stand, that they may oppose, Rom. ix. 11.

3.) Laying before them a suitable object for the drawing forth their corruption unto opposition, giving them such helpers as shall in many things cross their lusts, and exasperate them thereunto; as *Elijah*, a man of a fiery zeal, for a lukewarm *Ahab*.

4.) Withholding from them that effectual grace, by which alone that sin might be avoided; a not actually keeping them from that sin, by the might of his spirit and grace. That alone is effectual grace, which is actual: *He suffers them to walk in their own ways*.

And this the Lord may do,

(1. In respect of them, judicially: they deserve to be forsaken. *Ahab* is left to fill up the measure of his iniquities, *add iniquity to iniquity*, Psal. lxxix. 27.

(2. In respect of himself, by way of sovereignty, doing what he will with his own, *hardening whom he will*, Rom. ix. 15.

3.) He positively sends upon their understandings that, which the Scripture sets out under the terms of blindness, darkness, folly, delusion, slumber, a spirit of giddiness, and the like: the places are too many to rehearse. What secret actings in, and upon the minds of men, what disturbing of their advices, what mingling of corrupt affections with false, carnal reasonings, what givings up to the power of darkness, in Satan the prince thereof, this judicial act doth contain, I cannot insist upon; let it suffice, God will not help them to discern, yea, he will cause that they shall not discern, but hide from their eyes the things that concern their peace, and so give them up to contend with their only helpers.

6.) Suitably upon the will and affections he hath several acts, obfirming the one in corruption, and giving up the other to vileness, Rom. i. 24, 26. until the heart become thoroughly hardened, and the conscience seared; not forcing the one, but leaving it to follow the judgment of practical reason, which being a blind, yea, a blinded guide, whither can it lead a blind follower, but into the ditch? not defiling the other with infused sensuality, but provoking them to act according to inbred, native corruption, and by suffering frequent vile actings to confirm them in ways of vileness.

Take an instance of the whole: God gives helpers and deliverers to a sinful people, because of their provocations, some or all of them shall not taste of the deliverance, by them to be procured: wherefore though he sustains their lives in being, whereby they might have opportunity to know his mind, and their own peace; yet he gives them a power to contend with their helpers, causing their helpers to act such things, as under consideration of circumstances, shall exceedingly provoke these sinners: being so exasperated and provoked, the Lord who is free in all his dispensations, refuseth to make out to them that healing grace, whereby they might be kept from a sinful opposition: yea, being justly provoked, and resolved that they should not taste of the plenty to come, he makes them foolish and giddy in their reasonings and counsels, blinds them in their understandings, that they shall not be able to discern plain and evident things, tending to their own good, but in all their ways shall err like a drunken man in his vomit; whence that they may not be recovered, because he will destroy them, he gives in hardness and obstinacy upon their hearts and spirits, leaving them to suitable affections, to contend for their own ruin.

Now what are the ways and methods of sinful man's working in such an opposition, would be too long for me to declare; what prejudices are erected, what lusts pursued, what corrupt interests acted, and followed; how self is honoured, what false pretences coined, how God is slighted, if I should go about to lay open, I must look into the hell of these times, than which nothing can be more loathsome and abominable. Let it suffice, that sinful self, sinful lusts, sinful prejudices, sinful blindness, sinful carnal fears, sinful corrupt interests, sinful fleshly reasonings, sinful passions, and

and vile affections do all concur in such a work, are all woven up together in such a web.

[4.] See the distance of their aims. God's aim is only the manifestation of his own glory (than which nothing but himself is so infinitely good, nothing so righteous that it should be) and this by the way of goodness and severity, *Rom. xi. 22.* Goodness in faithfulness and mercy, preserving his, who are opposed, whereby his glory is exceedingly advanced: severity towards the opposers, that by a sinful cursed opposition they may fill up the measure of their iniquities, and receive this at the hand of the Lord, that they lie down in sorrow, wherein also he is glorious.

God forbid that I should speak this of all, that for any time, or under any temptation, may be carried to an opposition in any kind, or degree, to the instruments of God's glory amongst them. Many for a season may do it, and yet belong to God, who shall be recovered in due time. It is only of men given up, forsaken, opposing all the appearances of God with his saints and people in all his ways, of whom I speak.

Now what are the ends of this generation of fighters against this brazen wall, and how distant from those of the Lord's? *They consult to cast him down from his excellency, whom God will exalt, Psal. lxii. 4. They think not as the Lord, neither doth their heart mean so, but it is in their heart to destroy and to cut off, Isa. x. 7.* To satisfy their own corrupt lusts, ambition, avarice, revenge, superstition, contempt of God's people, because his, hatred of the yoke of the Lord, fleshly interests, even for these, and such like ends as these, is their undertaking.

Thus though there be a concurrence of God and man in the same thing, yet considering the distance of their principles, rules, actings; and ends, it is apparent that man doth sinfully, what the Lord doth judicially; which being an answer to the former objection, I return to give in some uses to the point.

Use 1. Let men, constant, sincere, upright in the ways of God, especially in difficult times, know what they are to expect from many, yea, the most of the generation, whose good they intend, and among whom they live: opposition and fighting is like to be their lot; and that not only it will be so because of mens lusts, corruptions, prejudices; but also it shall be so, from God's righteous judgments against a stubborn people: they harden their hearts that it may be so, to compass their ends; and God hardens their hearts that it shall be so, to bring about his aims: they will do it to execute their revenge upon others, they shall do it to execute God's vengeance upon themselves. This may be for consolation, that in their contending there is nothing but the wrath of man against them, whom they oppose (which God will restrain, or cause it to turn to his praise) but there is the wrath of God against themselves, which who can bear? This then let all expect, who engage their hearts to God, and follow the Lamb whither he goeth.

Men walking in the sincerity of their hearts are very apt to conceive that all sheaves should bow to theirs, that all men should cry, *grace, grace*, to their proceedings. Why should any oppose? *Quid meruere?* Alas! the more upright they are, the fitter for the Lord by them to break a gainsaying people. Let men keep close to those ways of God whereto protection is annexed, and let not their hearts fail them because of the people of the land; the storm of their fury will be like the plague of hail in *Egypt*, it smote only the cattle that were within the field; those, who upon the word of *Moses* drove them into the houses, preserved them alive. If men wander in the field of their own ways, of self-seeking, oppression, ambition, and the like, doubtless the storm will carry them away; but for those who keep house, who keep close to the Lord, though it may have much noise, terror, and dread with it, it shall not come nigh them. And if the Lord for causes best known, known only to his infinite wisdom, should take off any *Josiahs* in the opposition, he will certainly effect two things by it.

- (1.) To give them rest and peace.
- (2.) Further his cause and truth, by drawing out the prayers and appeals of the residue, and this living they valued above their lives.

All you then that are the Lord's workmen, be always prepared for a storm; wonder not that men see not the ways of the Lord, nor the judgments of our God, many are blinded. Admire not that they will so endlessly engage themselves into fruitless oppositions: they are hardened. Be not amazed that evidence of truth and righteousness will not affect them: they are corrupted. But this do; *Come and enter*

into the Chambers of God, and you shall be safe until this whole indignation be overpast. I speak of all them, and only them who follow the Lord in all his ways with upright hearts, and single minds, if the Lord will have you to be a rock and a brazen wall for men to dash themselves against, and to break in pieces, tho' the service be grievous to flesh and blood, yet it is his, whose you are; be prepared, the wind blows, a storm may come.


Use 2. Let men set upon opposition make a diligent enquiry, whether there be no hand in the business, but their own? whether their counsels be not leavened with the wrath of God, and their thoughts mixed with a spirit of giddiness, and themselves carried on to their own destruction? Let me see the opposer of the present ways of God, who upon his opposition is made more humble, more self-denying, more empty of self-wisdom, more fervent in supplications and waiting upon God, than formerly; and I will certainly blot him out of the roll of men judicially hardened. But if therewith men become also proud, selfish, carnally wise, revengeful, furious upon earthly interests, full, impatient; doubtless God is departed, and an evil spirit from the Lord prevaleth on them. O that men would look about them before it be too late, see the Lord disturbing them, before the waves return upon them; know that they may pull down some anticks that make a great shew of supporting the Church, and yet indeed are pargetted posts supported by it! The foundation is on a rock that shall not be prevailed against.

Use 3. See the infinite wisdom and sovereignty of Almighty God, that is able to bring light out of darkness, and to compass his own righteous judgments by the sinful advisings and undertakings of men. Indeed the Lord's sovereignty and dominion over the creature, doth not in any thing more exalt itself, than in working in all the reasonings, debates, consultations of men, to bring about his own counsels, through their free workings. That men should use, improve their wisdom, freedom, choice, yea, lusts, not once thinking of God; yet all that while do his work more than their own: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Of the last part of my text I shall not speak at all, neither indeed did I intend.

OF TOLERATION:

And the Duty of the Magistrate, about RELIGION.

 HE times are busy, and we must be brief. *Prefaces* for the most part are at all times needless, in these troublesome. Mine shall only be, that *ἀνευ προοιμίου & παύσης*, without either preface or solemnity, I will fall to the business in hand. The thing about which I am to deal, is commonly call'd, *Toleration in religion, or toleration of several religions.* The way wherein I shall proceed, is not by contest, thereby to give occasion for the reciprocation of a saw of debate with any; but by the laying down of such positive observations, as being either not apprehended, or not rightly improved, by the most, yet lie at the bottom of the whole difference between men about this business, and tend in themselves to give light unto a righteous and equitable determination of the main thing contended about. And lastly herein for method I shall first consider the grounds upon which that non-toleration, whereunto I cannot consent, hath been, and is still endeavoured to be supported, which I shall be necessitated to remove.

- I. By considering the arguments brought from Holy Writ.
- II. From some other general observations. And then in order
- III. I shall assert the positive truth, as to the substance of the business under contest.

All in these ensuing observations.

I. As to the first of these,

1. Although the expressions of toleration, and non-toleration, wherewith the thing in controversy is vested, do seem to cast the affirmation upon them who plead for a forbearance in things of religion towards dissenting persons, yet the truth is, they are purely upon the negation, and the affirmative lies fully on the other part; and so the weight of proving (which oft-times is heavy) lies on their shoulders. Though non-toleration sound like a negation, yet punishment (which terms in this matter are *ισοδυναμεία*) is a deep affirmation. And therefore it sufficeth not men to say, That they have consulted the mind of God, and cannot find that he ever spake to any of his saints or people to establish a toleration of error. And yet this is the first argument to oppose it, produced in the late testimony of the reverend and learned assembly of the Church of *Scotland*. Affirmative precepts must be produced for a non-toleration, that is, the punishing of erring persons. For actings of such high concernment men do generally desire a better warrant than this: There is nothing in the word against them. Clear light is needful for men, who walk in paths which lead directly to houses of blood. God hath not spoken of non-toleration, is a certain rule of forbearance. But God hath not spoken of toleration, is no rule of acting in opposition thereunto. What he hath spoken, one way or other, shall be afterwards considered. Positive actings must have positive precepts, and rules for them, as conscience is its own guide. If then you will have persons deviating in their apprehensions from the truth of the Gospel, civilly punished, you must bring better warrant than this, that God hath not spoken against it, or I shall not walk in your ways, but refrain my foot from your path.

2. That undoubtedly there are very many things under the command of the Lord, so becoming our duty, and within his promise, so made our privilege, which yet if not performed, or not enjoyed, are not of humane cognizance, as faith itself. Yet because the knowledge of the truth is in that rank of things, this also is urged as of weight, by the same learned persons, to the business in hand.

3. Errors, tho' never so impious, are yet distinguished from peace-disturbing enormities. If opinions in their own nature tend to the disturbance of the publick peace, either that publick tranquillity is not of God, or God alloweth a penal restraint of those opinions. It is a mistake to affirm, that those who plead for toleration, do allow of punishment for offences against the second table, not against the first. The case is the same both in respect of the one, and the other. What offences against the second table are punishable? Doubtless not all; but only such, as by a disorderly eruption pervert the course of publick quiet and society. Yea, none but such fall under humane cognizance. The warrant of exercising vindictive power amongst men, is from the reference of offences to their common tranquillity. *Delicta puniri publice interest*. Where punishment is the debt, *Bonum totius* is the creditor to exact it. And this is allowed, as to the offences against the first table. If any of them in their own nature (not some mens apprehensions) are disturbances of publick peace, they also are punishable. Only let not this be measured by disputable consequences, no more than the other are. Let the evidence be in the things themselves, and *Actum est*, let who will plead for them. Hence

Popish religion, warming in its very bowels a fatal engine against all magistracy amongst us, cannot upon our concessions plead for forbearance; it being a known and received maxim, that the Gospel of Christ clashes against no righteous ordinance of man.

And let this be spoken to the third argument of the forenamed reverend persons, from the analogy of delinquencies against the first and second table.

4. The plea for the punishment of erring persons from the penal constitution under the Old Testament against idolaters (which in the next place is urged) seems not very firm and convincing. The vast distance that is between idolatry, and any errors whatsoever, as merely such, however propagated or maintained with obstinacy, much impairerth the strength of this argumentation.

Idolatry is the yielding unto a creature the service and worship due to the Creator, *Reinold. de. Idol. lib. 2. cap. 1. S. 1. Idololatria est circa omne idolum famulatus & servitus*, Tertul. de Pol. the attendance and service of any idol. *Idololatriæ dicuntur*

cuntur qui simulachris eam servitutem exhibent, quæ debetur Deo, August. lib. 1. de Trinit. cap. 6. *They are idolaters who give that service to idols which is due unto God.* To render glory to the creature, as to God, is idolatry, say the Papists, *Bell. de Eccles. Triump. lib. 2. cap. 24. Greg. de Valen. de Idol. lib. 1. cap. 1.* Suitable to the description of it given by the Apostle, *Rom. i. 25.* plainly, that whereunto the sanction under debate was added, as the bond of the law against it (which was the bottom of the commendable proceedings of diverse Kings of Judah against such) was a voluntary relinquishment of Jehovah revealed unto them, to give the honour due unto him, to dunghil idols. Now though error and ignorance oft-times lie at the bottom of this abomination, yet error properly so called, and which under the name of heresy is opposed, is sufficiently differenced therefrom. That common definition of heresy, that it is an error, or errors, in or about the fundamentals of religion, maintained with stubbornness and pertinacy after conviction (for the main received by most protestant divines) will be no way suited unto that, which was before given of idolatry, and is as commonly received, being indeed much more clear, as shall be afterward declared. That this latter is proper and suitable to those scriptural descriptions, which we have of heresy, I dare not assert; but being received by them who urge the punishment thereof, it may be a sufficient ground of affirming, that those things whose definitions are so extremely different, are also very distant and discrepant in themselves, and therefore constitutions for the disposal of things concerning the one, cannot *eo nomine* conclude the other. Neither is the inference any stronger, than that a man may be hanged for coveting, because he may be so for murdering.

The penal constitutions of the Judaical policy (for so they were, which yet I urge not) concerning idolaters, must be stretched beyond their limits, if you intend to enwrap hereticks within their verge. If hereticks be also idolaters, as the Papists (the poor *Indians* who worship a piece of red cloth, the *Egyptians* who adored the deities which grew in their own gardens, being not more besotted with this abomination than they, who prostrate their souls unto, and lavish their devotion upon a piece of bread, a little before they prepare it for the draught, so casting the stumbling block of their iniquities before the faces of poor heathens and *Jews*, causing *Averroes* to breath out his soul, in this expression of that scandal, *Quoniam Christiani manducant Deum quem adorant, sit anima mea cum Philosophis*) I say then, the case seems to me to have received so considerable an alteration, that the plea of forbearance is extremely weakened, as to my present apprehension. However, for the present, I remove such from this debate.

5. The like to this also may be said concerning blasphemy, the law whereof is likewise commonly urged in this cause. The establishment for the punishment of a blasphemer is in *Lev. xxiv. 16.* Given it was upon the occasion of the blaspheming and cursing of the son of an *Egyptian*, upon his striving and contending with an *Israelite*. Being, probably, in his own apprehension wronged by his adversary, he fell to reviling his God. The word here used to express his sin, is *קָטַף* signifying also to pierce, and is twice so rendred, *Isa. xxxvi. 6. Hab. iii. 14.* Desperate expressions! piercing the honour and glory of the Most High, willingly and wilfully, were doubtless his death deserving crime. It is the same word that *Balack* used to *Balaam*, when he would have persuaded him to a deliberate cursing and pouring out of the imprecations on the people of God, *Numb. xxiii. 13, 14.* A resolved piercing of the name and glory of God, with cursed reproaches, is the crime here sentenced to death. The schoolmen tells us, that to complete blasphemy, the perverse affection of the heart, in detestation of the goodness of God, joined with the reproaches of his name, is required ^p. Which how remote it is from error of any sort (I mean within the compass of them whereof we speak) being a pure misapprehension of the understanding, embraced (though falsely) for the honour of God, I suppose is easily conceived: and so consequently that the argument for the death of a person erring, because he came off no easier of old who blasphemed, is a *baculo ad angulum*.

If any shall say that blasphemy is of a larger extent, and more general acceptance in the Scripture, I shall not deny it. But yet that that kind of blasphemy

^p *Thom. 224. g. 13. a 1. ad 1um.*

which was punishable with violent death, was comprehensive of any inferior crime, I suppose cannot be proved. However, blasphemy in the Scripture is never taken in any place, that I can remember, for a man's maintaining his own error; but for his reviling, and speaking evil of the truth, which he receiveth not: and so *Paul* before his conversion was a blasphemer⁹. Now if men, to whom forbearance is indulged in by-paths of their own, shall make it their work to cast dirt on the better ways of truth, it is to me very questionable whether they do not offend against that prime dictate of nature, for the preservation of humane society, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*: and for such I will be no advocate. Neither can indeed the law of blasphemy be impartially urged by us in any case of heresy whatsoever. For,

(1.) The penal sanctions of the laws of God are not in *England* esteemed of moral equity, and perpetually indispensable: for if so, why do adulterers unmolested behold the violent death of stealers?

(2.) The blasphemer by that law was not allowed his clergy: die he must without mercy, no room being left for the intervention of repentance, as to the removal of his temporal punishment: when once the witnesses garments were rent, he was *Anathema*. But in case of any heresy repentance, yea, recantation is a sure antidote (at least for once, so it is among the papists) against all corporal sufferings.

6. Neither doth that place in *Zachary*, chap. xiii. 3. concerning the *running through* of the false prophet, more prove or approve of the punishment of death to be inflicted for misapprehensions in the matters of religion (and if it proves not that, it proveth nothing; for slaying is the thing expressed, and certainly if proofs be taken from the letter, the letter must be obeyed, or we force the word to serve our hypothesis) than that place of *John* x. *He that entereth not by the door is a thief and a robber*; which *Bellarmino* strongly urgeth to this very purpose, because thieves and robbers are so dealt withal righteously¹. If such deductions may be allowed it will be easy to prove *quidlibet ex quolibet*, at any time.

If the letter be urged, and the sense of the letter as it lies (indeed the figurative sense of such places is the proper, literal sense of them) let that sense alone be kept to. Let parents then pass sentence, condemn, and execute their children, when they turn seducers; and that in any kind whatsoever, into what seduction soever they shall be engaged, be it most pernicious, or in things of less concernment. The letter allows of none of our distinctions: be they convinced, or not convinced; obstinate, or not obstinate, all is one; so it must be, thrust through, and slain by their parents, must they fall to the ground. Only observe, *his father and his mother that begat him* must be made magistrates, prophets with unclean spirits be turned into hereticks, only *thrusting through*, that must be as it is in the letter; yea, though plainly the party, of whom it is said, *Thou shalt not live*, ver. 3. is found alive, ver. 6. Surely such an *Orlean's* gloss is scarce sufficient to secure a conscience in slaying hereticks. But when men please, this whole place shall directly point at the discipline of the Churches, and their spiritual censures under the Gospel, curing deceivers, and bringing them home to confession and acknowledgment of their folly. See the late *Annot. of the Bible*.

7. From the asserting of the authority and description of the duty of the magistrate *Rom.* xiii. the argument is very easy that is produced for the suppressing, by external force, of erroneous persons. The paralogism is so foul and notorious, in this arguing, *He is to suppress evil deeds, heresy is an evil deed, therefore that also*, that it needs no confutation. That he is to punish all evil deeds was never yet affirmed. Unbelief is a work of the flesh, so is coveting; one the root sin, against the first, the other against the second table: yet in themselves both exempted from the magistrate's cognizance and jurisdiction. The evil doers, doubtless, for whose terror and punishment he is appointed, are such as by their deeds disturb that humane society, the defence and protection whereof is to him committed. That among the number of these are errors, the depravations of mens understandings, hath not yet been proved.

⁹ Acts xxvi. 11. Acts xviii. 6. 1 Tim. i. 13.

¹ Bell. lib. de Laicis. cap. 21.

² August. de util. creden. cap. 3. Thom. pp. q. 1. a. 10. Zanch. de SS. q. 12. cap. 2. reg. 10. Tilen. Synag. Theol. de interpret. S. thes. 8. Whitak. de SS. qu. 5. cap. 2. Armin. disput. pri. Theol. 9. 1. Amel. Met. Theol. cap. 34. Theol. 12.

8. The case of the seducer, from *Deut.* xiii. is urged with more shew of reason than any of the others, to the business in hand; but yet the extreme discrepancies between the proof, and the thing intended to be proved, make any argumentation from this place, as to the matter in hand, very intricate, obscure, and difficult. For,

(1.) The person here spoken of pretends an immediate revelation from heaven: he pretends dreams, and *gives signs and wonders*, ver. 1. and so exempts his spirit from any regular trial. Hereticks, for the most part, offer to be tried by the rule that is in *medio*, acknowledged of all; a few distempered enthusiasts excepted.

(2.) His business is to entice from the worship of Jehovah, not in respect of the manner, but the object, ver. 5. All hereticks pretend the fear of that great name.

(3.) The accepting and owning idol, dunghil gods in his room, is the thing persuaded to, ver. 2. (and those were only stocks and stones) and this in opposition to Jehovah, who had revealed himself by *Moses*. Hereticks worship him, own him, and abhor all thoughts of turning away from following after him, according to their erroneous apprehensions. *Manichees*, *Marcionites*, *Valentinians*, and such like names of infidels, I reckon not among hereticks; neither will their brainsick paganish follies be possibly comprehended under that definition of heresy, which is now generally received. *Mahometans* are far more rightly termed hereticks, than they.

(4.) This seducer was to die without mercy. And *Aynsworth* observes from the *Rabbines*, that this offender alone had traps laid to catch him; and were he but once overheard to whisper his seduction, though never so secretly, there was no expiation of his transgression, without his own blood: but now this place is urged for all kind of restraint and punishment whatsoever. Now where God requires blood, is it allowed to man to commute at an inferior rate? So I confess it is urged. But yet what lies at the bottom, in the chambers of their bellies, who plead for the power of the magistrate to punish erring persons, from those, and such like places as these, is too apparent. Blood is there: swiftly or slowly they walk to the chambers of death.

(5.) Obstinacy after conviction, turbulency, &c. which are now laid down as the main weights that turn the scale on the side of severity, are here not once mentioned, nor by any thing in the least intimated. If he have done it, yea, but once, openly, or secretly, whether he have been convinced of the sinfulness of it, or no, be he obstinate, or otherwise, it is not once enquired, die he must, as if he had committed murder, or the like indispensable death-procuring crime. If the punishment then of erring persons be urged from this place, all consideration of their conviction, obstinacy, pertinacy, must be laid aside: the text allows them no more plea in this business, than our law doth in the case of wilful murder.

(6.) Repentance and recantation will, in the judgment of all, relieve an erring person from any sentence of any punishment corporal whatsoever: and many reasons may be given, why they should so do. Here is no such allowance. Repent, or not repent; recant, or not recant; he hath no sacrifice of expiation provided for him, die he must.

(7.) This law contains the sanction of the third commandment, as the whole was a rule of the *Jewish* polity in the land of *Canaan*. This amongst us is generally conceived not binding, as such.

(8.) The formal reason of this law by some insisted on: Because he sought to turn a man from Jehovah.

[1.] Is of force only in this case of the object whereunto seduction tends, viz. strange gods, and no other.

[2.] Turning from Jehovah respects not any manner of backsliding in respect of the way of worship, but a falling away from him as the object of worship.

Now there being these and many other discrepancies hindering the cases proposed from running parallel, I profess, for my part, I cannot see how any such evident deductions can possibly be drawn from hence, as to be made a bottom of practice and acting in things of so high concernment. What may be allowed from the enquiry of those and the like constitutions, and deduced by analogy and proportion to the business in hand, I shall afterwards declare.

II. The sum of what is usually drawn out from Holy Writ, against such a forbearance, as I suppose may be asserted, and for the punishing hereticks with capital punishments being briefly discussed: I proceed in the next place to such other general

ral observations, as may serve to the farther clearing of the business in hand, and they are these that follow.

The forbearance of, or opposition unto errors, may be considered with respect either unto civil, or spiritual judicature.

First, For the latter, it is either personal, or ecclesiastical, properly so called. Personal forbearance of errors, in a spiritual sense, is a moral toleration or approbation of them: so also is ecclesiastical. The warrant for procedence against them, on that hand is plain and evident: certainly this way no error is to be forborn. All persons, who have any interest and share in truth, are obliged in their several ways and stations to an opposition unto every error. An opposition to be carried on by Gospel mediums, and spiritual weapons. Let them, according as they are called or opportuned, disprove them from the word, *Contending earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints*. Erring persons are usually *Bono animo*, says *Salvian*, very zealous to propagate their false conceptions; and shall the children of truth be backward in her defence? Precepts unto this as a duty, commendations of it, encouragements unto it, are very frequent in the Gospel. Alike is this duty incumbent on all Churches walking to the rule. The spiritual sword of discipline may be lawfully sheathed in the blood of heresies. No spiritual remedy can be too sharp for a spiritual disease. When the cure is suited to the malady, there is no danger of the application. And this is not denied by any. He that submits himself to any Church society, does it *ea lege*, of being obedient to the authority of Christ in that Church, in all its censures. *Volenti non fit injuria*. Error is offensive, and must be proceeded against. Examples and precepts of this abound in the Scriptures. The blood of many erring persons, I doubt not, will one day have a *Quo warranto* granted them, against their (as to the particulars in debate) orthodox slayers, who did it to promote the service of God. Let them not fear an after reckoning, who use the discipline of Christ, according to his appointment.

This being considered, the occasion of a most frequent paralogism is removed. If errors must be tolerated, say some, then men may do what they please, without controul. No means, it seems, must be used to reclaim them. But is Gospel conviction no means? Hath the sword of discipline no edge? Is there no means of instruction in the New Testament established, but a prison and a halter? Are the hammer of the word, and the sword of the spirit, which in days of old broke the stubbornest mountains, and overcame the proudest nations, now quite useless? God forbid! Were the Churches of Christ established according to his appointment, and the professors of the truth, so knit up *in the unity of the spirit and bond of peace*, as they ought to be, and were in the primitive times; I am persuaded those despised instruments would quickly make the proudest heretick to tremble. When the Churches walked in sweet communion, giving each other continual account of their affairs, and warning each other of all, or any such persons, as either in practice, or doctrine, walked not with a right foot (as we have examples in *Clem. Epist. ad Corinth.* the Churches of *Vienna* and *Lyons* to those of *Asia*, *Euseb.* of *Ignatius* to several persons and Churches, of *Ireneus* to *Victor.* *Euseb.* *Dionysius* to *Stephen*, *ibid.* and the like) hereticks found such cold entertainment, as made them ashamed, if not weary of their chosen wanderings. But this is not my present business.

Secondly, There is an opposition, or forbearance, in reference to a civil judicature, and procedence of things, which respecteth errors in a real sense, as to the inflicting, or not inflicting of punishment on religious delinquents. And this is the sole thing under debate, *viz.*

Whether persons enjoying civil authority over others, being entrusted therewithal, according to the constitutions of the place and nation, where the lot of them both, by providence, is fallen, are invested with power from above, and commanded in the word of God, to coerce, restrain, punish, confine, imprison, banish, hang, or burn, such of those persons under their jurisdiction, as shall not imbrace, profess, believe, and practise that truth and way of worship which is revealed unto them of God: or how far, into what degrees, by what means in any of these ways may they proceed?

The general propositions and considerations of the penal laws of God, which were before laid down, have, as I suppose, left this business to a naked debate from the word of truth, without any such prejudices on either part, as many take from a misapprehension

apprehension of the mind of God in them; and therefore, by the reader's patience, I shall venture upon the whole anew, as if no such arguments had ever been proposed for the affirmative of the question in hand, not declining the utmost weight that is in any of them, according to equity and due proportion. And here first I shall give in a few things.

(1.) To the question itself.

(2.) To the manner of handling it.

(1.) To the question itself. For herein I suppose,

[1.] That the persons enjoying authority do also enjoy the truth, which is to the advantage of the affirmative.

[2.] That their power in civil things is just and unquestionable, which also looks favourably on that side.

[3.] That non-toleration makes out itself in positive infliction of punishment; which is so, or is nothing. Casting men out of protection, exposing them to vulgar violence, is confessedly unworthy of men representing the authority of God, and contrary to the whole end of their trust.

(2.) To the manner of handling this question among persons at variance. And here I cannot but observe,

[1.] That if I have taken my aim aright, there is no one thing under debate amongst Christians, that is agitated with more confidence, and mutual animosity of the parties litigant; each charging other with dreadful inferences, streams of blood, and dishonour to God, flowing out from their several persuasions. So that oft-times instead of a fair dispute, you meet on this subject with a pathetical outcry, as though all religion were utterly contaminated and trampled under foot, if both these contradictory assertions be not imbraced. Now seeing that in itself it is a thing wherein the Gospel is exceedingly sparing, if not altogether silent, certainly there must be a farther interest than of judgment alone, or else that very much prejudicated with corrupt affections, or men could not possibly be carried out with so much violence, upon supposed self-created consequences, wherewith in this cause they urge one another.

[2.] That generally thus much of private interest appears in the several contesters, that non-toleration is the opinion of the many, and these enjoining the countenance of authority; toleration of the oppressed, who always go under the name of the faction, or factions, the unavoidable livery of the smaller number professing a way of worship by themselves, be it right or wrong. I do not desire to lay forth the usual deportment of men, seeking the suppressing of others differing from them, towards those in authority. It is but too clearly made out by daily experience. If they close with them, they are *Custodes utriusque Tabulae*, the Churches nursing fathers, &c. what they please; but if they draw back, for want of light or truth, to serve them, logges and storks find not worse entertainment from frogs, than they from some of them. Such things as these may, nay ought to be especially heeded by every one, that knows what influence corrupt affections have upon the judgments of men, and would willingly take the pains to wipe his eyes for the discerning of the truth.

These things premised, I assert, That

Non-toleration in the latitude, which is for persons in authority enjoying the truth (or supposing they do enjoy it) to punish in an arbitrary way (according to what they shall conceive to be condign) men, who will not forsake their own convictions, about any head, or heads of Christian religion whatsoever, to join with what they hold out, either for belief or worship (after the using of such ways of persuasion as they shall think fit) is no way warranted in the Gospel; nor can any sound proof for such a course be taken from the Old Testament.

The testimonies out of the law, which I can apprehend to have any colour or appearance of strength in them, with the examples approved of God, that seem to look this way, I considered at our entrance into this discourse.

I speak of punishing in an arbitrary way, for all instances produced to the purpose in hand, that speak of any punishment, mention nothing under death itself; which yet (at least in the first place) is not aimed at by those that use them in our days, as I suppose. Now some divines of no small name, maintain, that God hath not left the imposition of punishment in any measure to the wills of men.

Some arguments for the proof of the former assertion as laid down, I shall in due place make use of; for the present, I desire to commend to the serious pondering of all Christians in general, especially of those in authority, these ensuing considerations.

1. That it is no privilege of truth to furnish its assertors with this persuasion, that the dissenters from it ought forceably to be opposed, restrained, punished.

No false religion ever yet in the world did enthrone itself in the minds of men, enjoining a civil sovereignty over the persons of others, but it therewithal commanded them, under pain of neglect and contempt of itself, to crush any underling worship that would perk up in inferior consciences.

The old heathens carried their gods into the war (as did the *Philistines*, 1 Chron. xiv. 12. and the *Israelites* the ark with heathenish superstition, 1 Sam. iv. 3.) to whom they ascribed the success they obtained; and in requital of their kindness, they forced the dunghil deities of the conquered nations, to attend the triumph of their victorious idols; and unless they adopted them into the number of their own gods, all farther worship to them was forbidden. Hence were these inventions among the old *Romans*, by spells and enchantments to entice away a deity from any city they besieged (they being as expert at the getting of a Devil, as *Tobias's Raphael*, or the present *Romanists* at his fumigation) by which means they shrived into the honour of having thirty thousand unconquered idols; and deserved worthily that change of their city's epithet, from *ἑπιτομή δίκουμένης*, to *ἑπιτομή δεισιδαιμονίας*, which it justly inheriteth to this very day. *Rabsheke's* provocation to the example of the gods of the nations, 2 Kings xviii. 33, 34. and the Roman senate's consultation concerning the admitting of Christ to a place among their idols, that he might have been freely worshiped (their consent being prevented, by his almighty providence, who will not be enrolled among the vilest works of his most corrupted creatures) do both declare this thing.

Now not to speak of *Cain*, who seems to me to have laid the foundation of that cruelty, which was afterward inserted into the Churches orthodoxies, by the name of *Hereticidium*; we find the four famous empires of the world to have drank in this persuasion to the utmost, of suppressing all by force and violence, that consented not to them in their way of worship.

Nebuchadnezzar, the crown of the golden head, sets up a furnace with an image: and a negative answer to that query: Do you not serve my gods, nor worship my image? served to cast the servants of the living God into the midst of the fire, Dan. iii.

Daniel's casting into the lion's den, chap. vi. shews that the *Persian silver breast and arms*, did not want iron hands, to crush or break the opposers of, or dissenters from their religious edicts.

And though we find not much of the short-liv'd founder of the *Grecian* dominion; yet what was the practice of the branches of that empire, especially in the *Syrian* and *Egyptian* sprouts, the books of the *Maccabees*, *Josephus*, and others, do abundantly manifest.

For the *Romans*, though their judgment and practice (which fully and wholly are given over from the dragon to the beast and false prophet) be written in the blood of thousands of Christians, and so not to be questioned; yet that it may appear, that we are not the only men in this generation, that this wisdom of punishing dissenters was not born with us, I shall briefly give in what grounds they proceeded on, and the motives they had to proceed as they did.

(1.) First then they enacted it as a law, that no religious worship should be admitted or practised without the consent, decree, and establishment of the senate. Mention is made of a formal law to this purpose in *Tertullian*, *Apol. cap. 5.* though now we find it not. The foundation of it was doubtless in that of the twelve tables: *Separatim nemo habessit Deos, neve novos, sed ne Advenas, nisi publice ascitos, privatim colunto: Let none have gods to himself, neither let any privately worship new, or strange deities, unless they be publickly owned and enrolled.* And that it was their practice, and in the counsels of the wisest amongst them, appears in that

* Varro in Augustin, de civit. Dei.

advice given by *Mæcenas* to *Augustus* in *Dion Cassius*: Τὸ μὲν θεῖον πάντα πάντως αὐτὸς τε σέβει καὶ τὰ πατρία, καὶ τὰς ἄλλας τιμᾶν ἀνάγκη· τοὺς δὲ δὴ ξενίζοντας τι θεῶν αὐτὸ, καὶ μίσει καὶ κόλαζει, μὴ μόνον τῶν θεῶν ἕνεκα, ὧν καταφρονήσας δυσὶ ἄλλοις ἀντιπαραστήσειν, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ αἰνὰ τινα δαιμόνια οἱ τοῖστοι ἀντισφίροντες πολλὰς ἀναπειθεῖν ἀλλοτριοποιεῖν. καὶ τότε καὶ συνωμοσίαι καὶ συσάσεις, ἑταιρίαι τε γίνονται, ἅπερ ἡμεῖς μοναρχίᾳ συμφέρει. *Worship* (saith he) *the divine power thyself according to the constitutions of thy country, always, and at all times, and compel others so to honour it; but hate and punish those who introduce foreign religions, not only for the God's sake, whom he who contemneth will regard nothing else, but because such, introducing new deities, do persuade many to transgress [or to change affairs] whence are conjurations, seditions, private societies, things no way conducing to monarchy*, Hist. Rom. 1. 52.

Hence doubtless was that opposition, which *Paul* met withal in diverse of the Roman territories. Thus at *Athens* (though, as I suppose, they enjoyed there, their own laws and customs, very suitable as it should seem to those of the Romans) preaching *Jesus*, he was accused to be a *setter forth of strange gods*, Acts xiv. For although, as *Strabo* observeth of the *Athenians*, that publickly by the authority of the magistrates, πολλὰ τῶν ξενικῶν ἱερῶν παρεδέξαντο, *they received many things of foreign worships*; yet that none might attempt any such things of themselves, is notorious from the case of *Socrates*, who as *Laertius* witnesseth, was condemned, as οὗς μὲν νομίζει θεὸς ἢ πόλις οὗ νομίζοντα, ἕτεροι δὲ καὶ αἰνὰ δαιμόνια εἰσηγόμενον *one who thought not those to be Gods, whom the city thought so to be, but brought in certain new deities*. Hence, I say, was *Paul's* opposition, and his haling to *Mars hill*. Without doubt also this was the bottom of that stir and trouble he met withal about *Philippi*. It is true, private interest lay in the bottom with the chief opposers, but this legal constitution was that which was plausibly pretended. Acts xvi. 21. *They teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans*: οὐκ ἔστι Ῥωμαίοις, *it is not lawful for us Romans to receive the religion they hold out, because statutes are made amongst us against all religious worship not allowed by publick authority*. Let *Calvin's* short annotation on that place be seen. *Gallio's* refusing to judge between *Jews* (as he thought) in a jewish controversy, is no impeachment of this truth: had it been about any Roman establishment, he would quickly have interposed. Now this law amongst them was doubtless, *fundi Christiani calamitas*.

This then in the first place was enacted, that no worship should be admitted, no religion exercised, but what received establishment and approbation from them, who supposed themselves to be intrusted with authority over men in such things. And this power of the dragon was given over to the beast and false prophet. The anti-christian power succeeding into the room of the paganish, the Pope and councils of the Emperors and Senate, it was quickly confirmed that none should be suffered to live in peace, who received not his mark and name, Rev. xiii. 16, 17. Whereunto, for my part, I cannot but refer very many of those following imperial constitutions, which were made at first against the opposers of the Churches orthodoxism, but were turned against the witnesses of *Jesus* in the close.

(2.) This being done, they held out the reasons of this establishment. I shall touch only one or two of them, which are still common to them, who walk in the same paths with them.

[1.] Now the first was, That toleration of sundry ways of worship, and several religions, tends to the disturbance of the common-wealth, and that civil society, which men under the same government do, and ought to enjoy, So *Cicero* tells us, lib. 2. *De legibus*, *Deos, aut novos, aut alienigenas coli, confusionem habet, &c.* It brings in confusion of religion, and civil society. The same is clearly held out in that counsel of *Mæcenas* to *Augustus* before mentioned. *They* (saith he) *who introduce new deities, draw many into innovations, whence are conspiracies, seditions, conventicles, no way profitable for the common-wealth*.

[2.] Their other main reason was, That hereby the gods, whom they owned and worshiped, were dishonoured and provoked to plague them. That this was continually in their mouths and clamours, all the acts at the slaying of the martyrs, the rescripts of Emperors, the apologies of the Christians, as *Tertullian*, *Justin Martyr*, *Arnobius*, *Minutius Felix*, do abundantly testify. All trouble was still ascribed to their impiety, upon the first breaking out of any judgment, as though the cause of it had been the toleration of Christians, presently the vulgar cry was *Christianos ad Leones*.

Leones. Now that those causes and reasons have been traduced to all those, who have since acted the same things, especially to the Emperor's successor at *Rome*, needs not to be proved. With the power of the dragon, the wisdom also is derived. See that great champion, *Cardinal Bellarmine*, fighting with these very weapons, *Lib. de Laicis, cap. 21.* And indeed, however illustrated, improved, adorned, supported, flourished, and sweetned, they are the sum of all that to this day hath been said in the same case.

(3.) Having made a law, and supported it with such reasons as these, in proceeding to the execution of the penalty of that law, as to particular persons (which penalty being, as now, arbitrary, was inflicted unto banishment, imprisonment, mine-digging, torturing in sundry kinds, maiming, death, according to the pleasure of the judges) they always charged upon those persons, not only the denying and opposing their own deities, religion, and worship; but also that, that which they embraced, was foolish, absurd, detestable, pernicious, sinful, wicked, ruinous to common-wealths, cities, society, families, honesty, order, and the like. If a man should go about to delineate the Christian religion, by the lines and features drawn thereof, in the invectives and accusations of their adversaries, he might justly suppose, that indeed that was their god, which was set up at *Rome* with this inscription: *DEUS CHRISTIANORUM ONONTCHITES*: Being an image with asses ears, in a gown, claws or talons upon one foot, with a book in his hand. Charged they were that they worshiped an asses head, which impious folly first fastened on the *Jews* by *Tacitus, Hist. lib. 5. cap. 1.* in these words, *Effigiem animalis, quo monstrante, errorem sitimque depulerant, penetrali sacravere* (having before set out a feigned direction received by a company of asses) which he had borrowed from *Appion*, a railing *Egyptian* of *Alexandria**, was so ingrafted in their minds, that no defensative could be allowed. † The sun, the cross, *Sacerdotis Genitalia*, were either really supposed, or impiously imposed on them, as the objects of their worship. The blood and flesh of infants, at *Thyestean* banquets, was said to be their food and provision; promiscuous lust, with incest, their chiefest refreshment. Such as these it concerned them to have them thought to be, being resolved to use them, as if they were so indeed. Hence I am not sometimes without some suspicion, that many of the impure abominations, follies, villanies, which are ascribed unto the primitive hereticks, yea, the very *Gnosticks* themselves (upon whom the filth that lies is beyond all possible belief*) might be feigned and imposed, as to a great part thereof. For though not the very same, yet things as foolish and opposite to the light of nature, were at the same time charged on the most orthodox.

But you will say, they who charged these things upon the catholicks, were pagans, enemies of God, and Christ; but these who so charged hereticks, were Christians themselves. And so say I also, and therefore for reverence of the name (tho' perhaps I could) I say no more. But yet this I say, that story which you have in *Minutius Felix* (or *Arnobius* 8. Book *apologetical*) of the meeting of Christians, the drawing away of the light by a dog tied to the candlestick, so to make way for adulteries and incests, I have heard more than once told with no small confidence of *brownists* and *puritans*. Hath not this very same course been taken in latter ages? Consult the writings of *Waldensis*, and the rest of his companions, about *Wickliffe* and his followers; see the occasion of his falling off from *Rome* in our own chronicles, in *Fabian* of old, yea, and *Daniel* of late, to gratify a popish court; of *Eckius*, *Hosius*, *Staphylus*, *Bolseete*, *Bellarmino*, and the rest, who have undertaken to pourtray out unto us *Luther* and *Calvin*, with their followers; and you will quickly see, that their great design was to put on (as they did upon the head of *John Huf* at the council of *Constance*, when he was led to the stake) the ugly vizard of some devilish appearance, that under that form they might fit them for fire and fagot. And herein also is the polity of

* Joseph. ad. App. lib. 1.

† Moses novos ritus contrariosque ceteris mortalibus indidit. Profana illic omnia, qua apud nos sacra; rursum concessa apud illos, qua nobis incesta. Projectissima ad libidinem gens alienarum concubitus abstinent, inter se nihil illicitum. Tacitus (de Judæis) Hist. lib. 5. Judæos, impulsore Chresto quotidie tumultuantes Roma expulsi, falsis et foolishly, Suet. Claud. cap. 25. Quasissimis penis afficiebat, quos per flagitia invidiosus vulgus Christianos appellabat. Tac. An. lib. 15. Afflicti supplicii Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis nova ac malefica, Sueton. in Nerone, cap. 16.

* Epiphani. Tom. 2. lib. 1. Har. 26.

the dragon derived to the false prophet, and a colour tempered for persecutors to imbrue their hands in the blood of martyrs.

This was the old Roman way, and I thought it not amiss to cautionate those, enjoying truth and authority, that if it be possible, they may not walk in their steps and method. The course accounted so sovereign for the extirpation of error, was, as you see, first invented for the extirpation of truth.

2. I desire it may be observed, That the general issue and tendance of unlimited, arbitrary persecution, or punishing for conscience sake (because in all ages, *οι πλείονες κακοι*, and the worst of men have set at the upper end of the world, for the most part more false worshipers having hitherto enjoyed authority over others, than followers of the Lamb) hath been pernicious, fatal, and dreadful to the profession and professors of the Gospel, little, or not at all serviceable to the truth.

I have heard it averred by a reverend and learned personage, that more blood of hereticks hath been shed by wholesome severity, in the maintenance of the truth, and opposition unto errors; than hath been shed of the witnesses of Jesus, by the sword of persecution, in the hands of hereticks and false worshipers. An assertion, I conceive, under favour, so exceedingly distant from the reality of the thing itself, that I dare take upon me, against any man breathing, that in sundry Christian provinces, almost in every one of the *West*, more lives have been sacrificed to the one idol *Hereticidium*, of those that bear witness to the truth, in the belief for which they suffered, than all the hereticks properly so called, that ever were slain in all the provinces of the world, by men professing the Gospel. And I shall give that worthy divine, or any other of his persuasion, his option among all the chiefest provinces of *Europe*, to tie me up unto which they please. He that shall consider that above sixty thousand persons were in six years, or little more, cut off in a judicial way, by Duke *D' Alva* in the *Netherlands*, in pursuit of the sentence of the inquisition, will conclude that there is *causa facilis* in my hand.

The ancient contest between the *Homoousians* and the *Arians*, the first controversy the Churches were agitated withal, after they enjoyed a Christian magistrate (and may justly be supposed to be carried on to the advantage of error, beyond all that went before it, because of the civil magistrates interesting themselves in the quarrel) was not carried out to violence and blood, before the several persuasions lighted on several dominions and state interests: as between the *Goths*, *Vandals*, and the rest of their companions on one side, who were *Arians*; and the *Romans* on the other. In all whose bickerings notwithstanding the honour of severity did still attend the *Arians*, especially in *Africk*, where they persecuted the catholicks with horrible outrage and fury: five thousand at one time were barbarously exposed to all manner of cruel villany. Some eruptions of passion had been before among Emperors themselves, but still with this difference, that they who arianized carried the bell for zeal against *dissenters*. Witness *Valens*, who gave place in persecution to none of his pagan predecessors, killing, burning, slaying, making havock of all orthodox professors. Yea, perhaps, that which he did, at least was done by the countenance of his authority, at *Alexandria*, upon the placing in of *Lucius* an *Arian* in the room of *Athanasius*, thrusting *Peter* besides the chair, who was rightly placed according to the custom of those times; perhaps, I say, the tumults, rapes, murders, then and there acted, did outgo what before had been done by the pagans: see *Theodoret, Eccles. Hist. lib. 4. cap. 22*. It were tedious to pursue the lying, slandering, invectives, banishments, deaths, tumults, murders, which attend this council all along, after once they began to invoke the help of the Emperors one against another. Yet in this space some magistrates, weary with persecuting ways, did not only abstain practically from force and violence, as most of the orthodox Emperors did, but also enacted laws, for the freedom of such as dissented from them. *Jovianus*, a pious man, grants all peace, that will be peaceable; offended only with them, who would offer violence to others, *Socrates Eccles. Hist. lib. 4. cap. 21*. *Gratianus* makes a law, whereby he granted liberty to all sects, but *Manichees*, *Photinians*, and *Eunomians*, *Sozom. Eccles. Hist. lib. 7. cap. 1*. Many more the like examples might be produced.

The next difference about the worship of God, to the *Arian* and its branches, that was controverted in letters of blood, was about images, and their worship; in which, though some furious princes, in opposition to that growing idolatry, which

by popes, bishops, priests, and especially monks, was in those days, violently urged, did mingle some of their blood with their sacrifices; yet not to the tithe almost of what the *Iconolatæ* getting uppermost returned upon them and their adherents.

This, if occasion were, might be easily demonstrated from *Paulus Diaconus*, and others. After this, from about the year 850, about which time the *Iconolatæ* having ensnared the *West* by polity (the posterity of *Charles* the great, who had stoutly opposed the worship of images, complying with the popes, the fathers of that worship, for their own ends) and wearied the *East* by cruelty, that contest growing towards an end, the whole power of punishing for religion, became subservient to the dictates of the Pope, the Kings of the earth giving their power to the beast (unto which point things had been working all along) from thence, I say, until the death of *Servetus* in *Geneva*, the pursuit of *Gentilis Blandeata*, and some other mad-men in *Helvetia*, for the space well nigh of seven hundred years, the chiefest season of the reign of Satan and antichrist, all punishing for religion was managed by the authority of *Rome*, and against the poor witnesses of Jesus, prophesying in sackcloth in the several regions of the *West*. And what streams of blood were poured out, what millions of martyrs slain in that space, is known to all. Hence *Bellarmino* boasteth that the *Albigenses* were extinguished by the sword, *De Laic. cap. 22*. It is true there were laws enacted of old by *Theodosius*, *Valentinian*, *Martian*, as *C. De hæreticis, l. Manicheis, l. Arriani, l. Unicuque*, which last provideth for the death of seducers; but yet truly, though they were made by catholicks, and in the favour of catholicks, considering to what end they were used, I can look upon them no otherwise, but as very bottom stones of the tower of *Babel*.

This then in its latitude proving so pernicious to the profession of the Gospel, having for so long driven the woman into the wilderness, and truth into corners, being the main engine whereby the tower of *Babel* was built, and that which at this day they cry grace unto, as the foundation stone of the whole antichristian fabric, we had need be cautious what use we make (as one terms it well) of the broom of antichrist, to sweep the Church of Christ. Whether that we are in the truth, and they blinded with error, of whom we have spoken, be a sufficient plea, we shall see anon. In the mean time we may do well to remember what *Lewis* the XIIth of *France* said, yea swore, concerning the inhabitants of *Mirindol*, whom by the instigation of his prelates he had ordered to be slain, when news was brought him, what was their conversation and way of life: *Let them be hereticks if you please* (saith he) *but assuredly they are better than I, and my catholicks*. Take heed lest the punished be better than the punishers.

Let me add to this observation only this, That the attempt to suppress any opinions whatsoever by force, hath been for the most part fruitless. For either some few particular persons are proceeded against, or else greater multitudes: if some particulars only, the ashes of one hath always proved the seed of many opinionatists. Examples are innumerable, take one, which is boasted of, as a pattern of severity taken from antiquity. About the year 390, *Priscillianus*, a *Manichee*, and a *Gnostick*, by the procurement of *Ithacius* and *Idacius*, two bishops, was put to death by *Maximus*, an usurping Emperor, who ruled for a season, having slain *Gratianus*: as that kind of men would always close with any authority that might serve their own ends. Now what was the issue thereof? *Martinus*, a catholick bishop, renounces their communion who did it. The historian that reports it, giving this censure of the whole: *Sic pessimo exemplo sublatis sunt homines luce indignissimi*: though the men (*Priscillian* and his companions) were most unworthy to live, yet their sentence to death was most unjust. But no matter for this, Was not the heresy suppressed thereby? See what the same historian, who wrote not long after, and was able to testify the event, says of it: *Non solum non repressa est hæresis, sed confirmata, & latius propagata est, &c.* The heresy was so far from being suppressed hereby, that it was confirmed and propagated. His followers, who before honoured him as a saint, now adore him as a martyr. The like in all ages hath been the issue of the like endeavours.

But now, if this course be undertaken against multitudes, what is or hath been the usual end of such undertakings? Take some examples of late days. *Charles* the Vth,

¹ Becanus de fide hæreticis servanda. Bell. de Laicis, &c.

² Severus Sulpitius, lib. 2. Eccles. Hist.

the most mighty Emperor of *Germany*, undertakes by violence to extirpate the *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* out of the empire. After a tedious war, the death of many thousands, the wasting of the nation, in the close of all, himself is driven out of *Germany*, and the business left much where it began, *Sleid. Com. Philip of Spain*, will needs force the inquisition upon the *Netherlands*. What is the issue? After the expence of an ocean of blood, and more coin, than would have purchased the country twice over, his posterity is totally deprived of all sovereignty over those parts.

Patrick Hamilton and *George Wishard* are put to death in *Scotland*, by the procurement of a cardinal; the cardinal is instantly murdered by some desperate young men, and a war raised there about religion, which was never well quieted, until having hunted their Queen out of her native kingdom, she had her head chop'd off in *England*^a. The wars, seditions, tumults, murders, massacres, rapes, burnings, &c. that followed the same attempt in *France*, cannot be thought of without horror and detestation. Neither knew those things any end, until the present forbearance was granted. Instances might be multiplied, but these things are known to all. If any shall say, All these evils followed the attempting to suppress truth, not error: I shall answer him another time, being loth to do it, unless compelled. Only for the present I shall say, that error hath as much right to a forceable defence, as truth.

3. To stir us up yet farther to a serious consideration of the grounds and reasons which are laid down for the inflicting of punishment upon any for exorbitancies in things of religion (upon what hath been said) the perpetual coincidence of the causes by them held forth, who pretend to plead for just severity, with their pretences who have acted unjust persecution, would be well heeded.

The position is laid down in general on both sides, That erring persons are so and so to be dealt withal: That such is the power and duty of the magistrate in such cases. The definition of heresy is agreed on for the main; only the papists place the Church's determination, where others thrust in the hereticks conviction, a thing much more obscure to by-standers and judges also. The appellations wherewith truth persecuted, and error pursued, are clothed still the same. The consequents urged on all sides, of dishonour to God, trouble to the state, and the like, not at all discrepant. The arguments for the one, and other, for the most part the same. Look what reasons one sect gives for the punishing of another, the names being changed are retorted. He blasphemeth to the heretick, who chargeth blasphemy upon him. We use no other arguments, cite no other texts, press no other consequences for the punishing of other hereticks, than the papists, the wisest hereticks breathing, do for the punishment of us.

No colour, no pretence, but hath been equally used in all hands. None can say, This is mine. To *Luther's* objection, that the Church of Christ never burned an heretick, for *Husse* and *Hierom* were none; *Bellarmino* answers, they were hereticks to them catholicks, which did suffice, *de Laic. cap. 21*. And indeed this vicissitude of things is very pernicious. All Christians almost are hereticks to some enjoying authority (as *Salvian* said the case was, between the *Homoousians* and *Arians* in his time) and most of those enjoying authority are persuaded it is their duty to suppress them, whom they account hereticks, and answerably have more or less acted according to this persuasion, until by blood, wars, and horrid devastations of nations, some of them have been wearied. From the first *Croisade* against the *Albigenses*, through the war of the *Hussites* under *Zisca* and the *Procopii*, those dreadful massacres before recounted, what a stage of blood hath *Europe* been made upon this account? I desire that to this point the declaration of the *Netherlands*, at the beginning of their troubles (whom *Bellarmino* affirms to have petitioned for liberty of conscience, as he was writing *de Hereticidio*, the thing being long before granted at *Spira*, at the convention of the states of the empire, in the year 1526.) may be seriously considered.

4. For the necessity of courses of extremity against erroneous persons, for the upholding the faith once delivered to the saints, and the keeping the Churches in peace, it doth not appear to me to be so urgent as is pretended.

^a History of Reformation in Scotland.

For three hundred years the Church had no assistance from any magistrate against hereticks; and yet in all that space there was not one long-liv'd, or far-spreading heresy, in comparison of those that followed. As the disease is spiritual, so was the remedy which in those days was applied, and the Lord Jesus Christ made it effectual. The Christians also of those days disclaim'd all thoughts of such proceedings. The expressions of the most ancient, as *Polycarpus*, *Ignatius*, *Irenæus*, concerning hereticks, are sharp and cutting; their avoiding of them being admonished precise and severe; their confutations of them laborious and diligent; their Church censures, and ejections, piercing and sharpe; communion amongst the Churches close, exact, and carefully preserved, so that a stubborn heretick was thrust out of Christian society. But for corporal punishment to be inflicted on them, in their writings not a syllable. Until *Augustine* was changed from his first resolution and persuasion, by the madness of *donatistical Circumcellians*, this doctrine had poor footing in antiquity. And whether his reasons as to this point be convincing, let any impartial man read his *Epistle 50*, and determine. What some say, The Christians would have been of another mind, had they enjoyed Christian magistrates, is so suited to our present frame and temper, but so unworthy of them, that I should wrong them by a defensive. What was their sense of them in a spiritual way is clear. *John*, they say, would not abide in a bath where *Cerinthus* the heretick infected with Judaism and Paganism was; saying, Let us depart, lest the building fall on us where *Cerinthus* is, *Iren. lib. 3. cap. 3.* *Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 25.* *Marcion* meeting *Polycarpus*, and asking him whether he knew him, or acknowledged him; his answer was, *Yea, to be the first-born of the Devil*, *Euseb. lib. 4. cap. 14.* *Ignatius's* epistles are full of the like expressions. *Irenæus* says, he would have no words with them, *lib. 3. cap. 3.* *Tertullian's* books testify for him at large, with what keenness of spirit he pursued the hereticks of his days (though before the end of them he had the unhappiness to be almost one himself.) *Cyprian* cries out: *Nulla cum talibus convivium, nulla colloquia, nulla commercia misceantur*, *Epist. 3. ad Cornel.* Neither eat, nor talk, nor deal with them. *Antonius* the hermit leaves testimony when he was dying, *That he never had peaceable conference with them all his days*, *Vita Anton. inter Oper. Athan.* Surely had these men perceived the mind of God for their bodily punishment, they would not have failed to signify their minds therein; but truly their expressions hold out rather the quite contrary. Τῆς μισῆντας τὸ θεῖον, μισεῖν χρὴ καὶ ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἑχθροῖς αὐτῶν ἐκτίκεσθαι: ἢ μὴ καὶ τύπτειν αὐτοὺς καὶ διώκειν, καθὼς τὰ ἱδὴν τὰ μὴ εἰδὸτα τὸ κύριον καὶ θεῖον, ἀλλὰ ἑχθροὺς μὴ ἠγνοῦν καὶ χωρῖσθαι ἀπ' αὐτῶν, says *Ignatius*, *Epist. ad Philad.* Count them enemies, and separate from them who hate God; but for beating or persecuting them, that is proper to the heathen who know not God, nor our Saviour; do not you so. *Tertullian* in very many places lays down general maxims tending to more liberty than is now pleaded for. One or two places may be pointed at: *Videte ne & hoc ad irreligiositatis elogium concurrat, adimere libertatem religionis, & interdicere optionem divinitatis, ut non liceat mihi colere quem velim, sed cogar colere quem nolim. Nemo se ab invito coli vellet, ne homo quidem*, *Apol. cap. 23.* And again to *Scapula* the governour of *Carthage*, to dissuade him from the persecution he intended: *Tamen humani juris & naturalis potestatis est unicuique quod putaverit colere, nec alii obest, aut prodest alterius religio: sed nec religionis est cogere religionem, quæ sponte suscipi debeat, non vi; cum & hostiæ ab animo libenti expostulantur: ita & si nos compuleritis ad sacrificandum, nihil præstabitis diis vestris, ab invitis enim sacrificia non desiderabunt.* And I desire to know, whether that which he maketh to be the plea of Christians, may not also be used by all erring persons. *Totum quod in nos potestis, nostrum est arbitrium. Certe si velim, Christianus sum, tunc ergo me damnabis, si damnari velim. Cum vero quod in me potes, nisi velim, non potes, jam mea voluntatis est quod potes, non tuæ potestatis.* *Apol. cap. ult.* Hence was that quære of *Lactantius*: *Quis imponet mihi necessitatem aut credendi quod nolim, aut quod velim non credendi?* And long after these *Gregory of Rome*, *lib. 2. Epist. 52.* tells us, *Nova & inaudita est ista prædicatio, quæ verberibus exigit fidem*: to beat in faith with stripes, was then a new kind of preaching. These and the like were their expressions.

It is true, in the three first centuries many fond, foolish, corrupt opinions were broached by sundry brain-sick men; but they laid little hold of the Churches, kept themselves in the breasts of some few disorderly wanderers, and did very little promote

mote the mystery of iniquity: but afterwards, when the Roman Emperors, and the great men of the earth, under and with them, began to interpose in the things of religion, and were mutually wooed, instigated, and provoked by the parties at variance (as indeed it is a shame to consider upon all meetings, assemblies, disputes, councils, what running, what flattering, what insinuation at court were used on all hands) what root did diverse heresies take, how far were they propagated? Witness Arianism which had almost invaded the whole world.

Furthermore, by the ways which were invented off from the rule, for the extirpation of errors, when by the instigation of prelates, the Emperors were (to their own ruin) persuaded to them, the man of sin walked to his throne. Those very laws, edicts, and declarations, which were obtained against erring persons, did the bishops of *Rome* invert and use against all the witnesses of Jesus. The Devil durst not be so bold as to employ that his grand agent in his apprenticeship against the saints; but he first suffers him to exercise his hand against hereticks, intending to make use of him afterwards to another purpose. In most of those contests, which the Roman pontiffs had with their fellow bishops, by which they insensibly advanced their own supremacy, it was the defence of catholicks they undertook, as in the case of *Athanasius* and others.

Neither did the Christians of old at once step into the persuasion of punishing corporally in case of religion. *Constantine* makes a decree at first, *Τὴν ἰδεὺς ἐπὶ τῶν θρησκείας ἐκ ἀνυποτάτου εἶναι*, that liberty of worship is not to be denied, and therefore the Christians, as others, should have liberty to keep the faith of their religion and heresy, *Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 10. cap. 5.* And in the same edict he saith (how truly I know not, but yet great *Constantine* said it) *That it is most certain, that this is conducing to the peace of the empire, that free option and choice of religion be left to all.* Afterwards, when he began a little farther to engage himself in the business of religion, being indeed wearied with the petitions of bishops and their associates, for the persecution of one another, what troubles in a few years did he intricate himself withal? Perplexed he was in his spirit to see the untoward revengefulness of that sort of people; insomuch that he writes expressly to them, being assembled in council at *Tyre*, *That they had neither care of the truth, nor love to peace, nor conscience of scandal, nor would by any means be prevailed on to lay down their malice and animosities*, *Socrat. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 22.* At length an *Arian* priest carries favour with his sister *Constantia*: she gets him into the esteem of her brother: after some insinuations of his, new edicts, new synods, new recallings, new banishments of other persons, follow one upon the neck of another, *Ruffin. Eccles. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 11.* And when this knack was once found out of promoting a sect by imperial favour, it is admirable to consider, how those good princes, *Constantine* and his sons, were abused, misled, enraged, engaged into mutual dissensions, by the lies, flatteries, equivocations of such as called themselves bishops, *Ruffin. lib. 1. cap. 15, 16, &c.* as also how soon with the many the whole business of religion was here-upon turned into a matter of external pomp and dominion. But it is besides my purpose to rake into that hell of confusion, which by this means brake in upon the Churches in succeeding ages. Only for the following imperial edicts and constitutions in the behalf of the faith catholick, and for the punishing of erring persons, I desire to observe,

(1.) That the Emperors were stirred up to them by turbulent priests, and aspiring prelates. Let the Popes letters to them witness this, *Leo Epist. 75, &c.*

(2.) That they were still bottomed upon such and such councils, that were not to be opposed or spoken against, when all of them were spent for the most part about things quite besides and beyond the Scripture (as feastings, and fastings, and bishops jurisdictions) and some of them were the very ulcers, and impostumations of Christian religion, as those of *Nice* and *Ephesus*, both the second; and in general all of them the sea, upon which the whore exalted her seat and throne. And these things did those good men, either deceived by the craft of hereticks, or wearied by the importunity of the orthodox.

And yet notwithstanding all this (as I shall afterwards declare) I cannot close with that counsel which *Themistius* a philosopher gave to *Valens* the Emperor, and am most abhorrent from the reason of his counsel, viz. *That he should let all sects alone, because it was for the glory of God to be honoured with diversities of opinions*

and

and ways of worship. Yet though this reason be false and impious, yet the advice itself was well conducing at that time to the peace of the Churches, something qualifying the spirit of that heretical Emperor, who before had cruelly raged against all orthodox professors of the deity of Christ, *Socrat. lib. 4. cap. 27.*

5. Lastly, add unto all that hath been said, *vice coronidis*, for the use of such as enjoying authority, may have misapprehensions of some truths of Christ, a sad consideration concerning the end and issue, which the Lord in his righteous judgment hath in all ages given to persecutors and persecution.

Nero (of whom says *Tertullian: Tali Dedicatorum gaudet sanguis Christianus*) who was the first that employed the sword against our religion, being condemned by the senate to be punished *More Majorum*, slew himself, with this exprobration of his own fordid villainy: *Turpiter vixi, turpius morior*, *Sueton. in Ner. Domitian*, the inheritor of his rage and folly, murdered in his own house by his servants, *Idem in Domit. Trajan* by a resolution of his joints, nummedness of body, and a choaking water, perished miserably, *Dio Cassius de Traj.* This is he, whose order not to seek out Christians to punishment, but yet to punish them appearing, you have in his *Epistle to Pliny*, a provincial governor under him, *Plin. Epist. 97.* which though commended by *Eusebius, Eccles. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 30.* yet is canvassed by *Tertullian*, as a foolish, impious, wicked constitution, *Apol. cap. 2.* *Hadrian* perishing with a flux, and casting of blood, paid some part of the price of the innocent blood which he had shed, *Ælius Spart. in Had.* *Severus* poisoned himself, to put an end to his tormenting pains, *Jul. Capitol. Maximinus*, with his son yet a child, was torn in pieces of the soldiers, all crying out, *That not a whelp was to be left of so cursed a stock.* *Decius* having reigned scarce two years, was slain with his children, *Euseb. lib. 7. cap. 1.* *Valerian* being taken by *Sapores* King of *Persia*, was carried about in a cage, and being seventy years old, was at length flayed alive, *Euseb. lib. 7. cap. 9.* Another *Valerian*, of the same stamp with his brother and kindred, was murdered at *Milan.* *Dioclesian* being smitten with madness had his palace consumed with fire from heaven, and perished miserably. The city of *Alexandria*, in the time of *Galienus*, was for its persecution so wasted with variety of destroying plagues and judgments, that the whole number of its inhabitants answered not the grayheaded old men that were in it before, *Dionys. apud Euseb. lib. 7. cap. 20.* What was the end of *Julian*, is known to all. Now truly of many of these we might well say, as one of old did: *Quales Imperatores?* As *Trajan, Hadrian, Severus, Julian*, what excellent Emperors had they been, had they not been persecutors? And all this, says *Tertullian*, is come to pass, that men might learn *μη διαμαχεσθαι*. He that desires to see more of this, let him consult *Tertul. Apol. & ad Scap. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 7. cap. 21.* *August. de civit. Dei, lib. 18. cap. 52. Eutrop. lib. 8.* It would be tedious to descend to examples of latter ages, our own and the neighbour nations, do so much, too much, abound with them. Let this that hath been spoken suffice to cautionate mortal men, how they meddle with the vessels of the sanctuary.

But now may some say: What will be the issue of this discourse? do you then leave every one at liberty in the things of God? Hath the magistrate nothing to do in or about religion? Is he to depose the care thereof? Shall men, exasperated in their spirits by different persuasions, be suffered to devour one another as they please?

III. I have only shewed the weakness of those grounds, which some men make the bottom of their testimonies, against the toleration of any thing, but what themselves conceive to be truth; as also taken away the chief of those arguments, upon which such a proceeding against erring persons is bottomed, as tends to blood and death: what positively the civil magistrate may, nay ought to do, in the whole business of religion, comes in the next place to be considered, being the third and last part of our discourse.

Now my thoughts unto this I shall hold out under these three heads.

1. What is the magistrates duty as to the truth, and persons professing it.
2. What in reference to the opposers and revilers of it.
3. What in respect of dissenters from it.

1. I shall begin with the first, which to me is much of chiefest importance.

His power, or rather his duty herein, I shall hold out in these ensuing propositions.

(1.) As all men in general, so magistrates, even as such, are bound to know the mind and will of God, in the things which concern his honour and worship. They are bound, I say, to know it. This obligation lies upon all creatures capable of knowing the Creator, answerably to that light which of him they have, and the means of revelation which they do enjoy. He, of whom we speak, is supposed to have that most sovereign and supreme of all outward teachings, the word of God, with such other helps as are thereby revealed, and therein appointed; so as he is bound to know the will of God in every thing him concerning; wherein he fails, and comes short of the truth, it is his sin; the defect being not in the manner of the revelation, but in the corruption of his darkened mind. Now that he is to make this enquiry, in reference to his calling, is evident from that of *David*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. *He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord.* This fear is only taught by the word. Without a right knowledge of God, and his mind, there can be no true fear of him. That command also, for the *Jewish* magistrate, to study it day and night, and to have the book of the law continually before him, because it was the rule of that civil polity, whereof he was under God the head and preserver, by analogy confirmeth this truth, *Deut.* xviii.

(2.) If he desire this wisdom sincerely, and the Lord intend him *as a light of the morning, as a rising sun, a morning without clouds*, to his people, doubtless he will reveal himself to him, and teach him his mind; as he did *David* and *Solomon*, and other holy men of old. And as to this, I shall only with due reverence cautionate the sons of men, that are exalted in government over their brethren, that they take heed of a lifted up spirit, the greatest closer of the heart against the truth of God. He hath promised to teach the humble, and the lowly in mind; the proud he beholdeth afar off. Is not this the great reason that the rulers believe not on him, and the nobles lay not their necks to the yoke of the Lord, even because their hearts are lifted up within them, and so lie in an unteachable frame before the Lord.

(3.) The truth being revealed to them, and their own hearts made acquainted therewith, after their personal engagements to the practice of the power of godliness, according to the *revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, three things are incumbent on him in reference thereunto.

[1.] That according to the measure of its revelation unto him he declare, or take care that it be declared unto others, even all committed to his governing charge. The general equity that is in the obligation of *strengthening others, when we are confirmed*, desiring them to be like ourselves in all participation of grace from God, the nature of true zeal for the glory and name of the Lord, are a sufficient warrant for this, yea, demand the performance of this duty. So *Jehoshaphat*, being instructed in the ways of God, sent princes and priests to teach it in all the cities and towns of *Judah*, 2 Chron. xvii. 8, 9, 10. As also did *Hezekiah*, 2 Chron. xxx. 6, 7, 8. Let this then be our first position:

1. It belongs to the duty of the supreme magistrate, the governour, or shepherd of the people in any nation, being acquainted with the mind of God, to take care that the truth of the Gospel be preached to all the people of that nation, according to the way appointed, either ordinary, or extraordinary.

I make no doubt but God will quickly reject them from their power, who knowing their Master's will are negligent herein.

[2.] As he is to declare it, so he is to protect it from all violence whatever. Jesus Christ is the great King of nations, as well as the holy King of saints. His Gospel hath a right to be preached in every nation, and to every creature under heaven. Whoever forbids or hinders the free passage of it, is not only sinful and impious toward God, but also injurious towards men. Certainly the magistrate is to protect every one, and every thing in their own right, from the violence and injury of unruly men. In the preaching and receiving the Gospel there is a right acted, superior to all earthly privileges whatever. In this then the magistrate is to protect it, that under him the professors thereof *may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty*. And for this cause they to whom the sword is committed, may with the sword lawfully defend the truth, as the undoubted right and privilege of those who do enjoy it, and of which they cannot be deprived without the greatest injury. *Jephthah* laid it down as the ground of the equity of the wars he waged against the *Ammonites*, *That they would possess what the Lord their God gave them to possess;* the

the defence whereof he pursu'd to the subversion of their (at first) invading enemies, *Judges* xi. 24, 33. It is no new thing to begin in defence, and end in offence. Now if the truth be given us of the Lord our God to possess, certainly it may be contended for by those who owe protection thereunto. And if this were not so, we may pray, and prevail, for the prosperity of those in authority; and yet when we have done, not have a right to a quiet and peaceable life. Let this then be the second *Affertion*:

II. The Gospel being preached, and declared as of right it ought to be, it is the duty of the magistrate, by the power wherewith he is entrusted, to protect and defend it against all, or any persons, that by force, or violence, shall seek to hinder the progress, or stop the passage of it, under what pretence soever.

And that a neglect of this also will be attended with the anger of the Lord, and the kindling of his wrath, shall not long be doubted of any.

[3.] The protecting, assisting, and supporting of all the professors of it in that profession, and in ways of truth's appointment, for the practice of that which is embraced, and the furtherance of it towards them who as yet embrace it not, is also required. And of this there are sundry parts.

1.) That seeing Christ Jesus hath appointed his disciples to walk in such societies, and requireth of them such kind of worship, as cannot be perform'd without their meeting together *ἐκκοινωνησάντων*, in one place; that he either provide, or grant being provided, the use of such places under his protection, as may in all, or any kind be suited and fitted for that end and purpose. And the ground of this is,

(1. From the right which the Gospel of Christ hath to be received amongst men, according to his own appointment; whether that be the appointment of Christ, or not, amongst us is no question.

(2. Because the magistrate hath the sole power of all publick places, and the protection of them is committed to him alone, by virtue of that consent into government which is among any people. This proved as above.

2.) A protection in the use of those places, and all things exercised in them, answerable to that which he doth, and is bound to grant unto men in their own private dwellings, and families. The reason why I am protected from all hurt or violence in my family is, because I have a right to dispose of all things in my family being my own, and so hath not another. It was asserted before, that Christians have a right to the ordinances of Christ, and truth a right to be at liberty; and therefore if any shall invade, disturb, or trouble them in their rights and liberties, he is bound *ex officio* to give them a protection, *not bearing the sword in vain*.

Now being in my family, in my private house, the assistance of those in authority is due,

(1. In respect of them without.

(2. In respect of them within.

(1. For them without, if any one will, against my consent, intrude himself upon my family enjoyments, to share with me, or violently come to take away that is mine, or disturb me in the quiet possession of it; the magistrate takes cognizance of such disturbances, and punisheth them according to equity. Suitably, if any person, or persons whatsoever, shall with violence put themselves upon the enjoyments of such ordinances, as those enjoying the rights of the Gospel have obtained to themselves, or shall come in their celebration of them, to cause disturbance; certainly that magistrate protects not every one in his undoubted rights, who doth not accommodate the wronged parties with the assistance of his power, to the punishment of the transgressors.

(2. For house dwellers, servants, or any others, who may break out into such offences, and incorrigibleness, as the amendment thereof may be beyond what I am intrusted to do to any, by law of God or man; shall not the magistrate here also interpose; is not his assistance here abundantly required, and always granted?

From parity of reason is it not as due for their protection, who in the enjoyment of their publick religious rights may receive disturbance, and be under force, from some, incorrigible by any rule among themselves? For instance, suppose a person justly excommunicated, and ejected any society of Christians as to any spiritual communion, yet will with outward force and violence put himself upon them in their closest acts of communion; doubtless their rights are here to be by power preserved.

3.) That

3.) That whereas the preachers of the Gospel are now to be maintained in an ordinary way, and to expect their supportment in an usual course of providence; and seeing that many to whom we have proved that the Gospel is to be declared, by the care of the magistrate, will not, or cannot make such provisions for them as is needful, in these last evil days of the world; it is incumbent on those nursing fathers to provide for them, who because of their continual labours in the work of the Lord, are disabled to make provision for themselves. Where Churches are settled according to the rule of the Gospel, and not too much freightned by reason of want, there may be an alteration as to this proposal. That this engagement lies first upon the Churches, was seen of old. Hence that caution, or canon, of the council of *Chalcedon*, cap. 6. *μηδ' εἰς χειροτονεῖσθαι ἀπολειψόμενος*, *let none be ordained at large: Ne dicatur, Mendicat in palæstra infelix clericus*, says the *Scholiast*, *lest he should be driven to beg for want of maintenance*.

This being the sum of what, as to this head, I have to assert, I shall give in the proofs of it, and then draw some farther positions.

Reason 1. The bottom of the whole ariseth from that right which the Gospel hath to be preached to all nations and people, and that right paramount to all civil sanctions and constitutions, which every soul hath to receive it in the profession thereof. And all this flows from the donation of the Father unto Jesus Christ, whereby he is made heir of all things, Heb. i. 3. *Having the nations given him for his inheritance, the utmost parts of the earth for his possession*, Psal. ii. 8. Being also Lord of lords, and King of kings, acting nothing in taking possession of his own, but what his sovereignty bears him out in.

Reasf. 2. All this tends to the apparent good of those committed to his charge, that they may lead their lives in godliness and honesty, which is the very chief end of magistracy committed unto men. This is directly intended, all other things come in by accident, and upon suppositions.

Reasf. 3. No person living can pretend to the least injury by this, none is deprived, none wronged.

Reasf. 4. The precepts given unto them, and the promises made concerning them, do abundantly confirm all that hath been asserted. *Psal.* ii. 10, 11. they are commanded as kings and judges to serve the Lord, in promoting the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is promised, *Isa.* xlix. 23. that *they shall be nursing fathers, and nursing mothers to the Church of Christ*, even then, when she shall suck the breasts of kings (earthly things are the milk of kingly breasts) *when her officers shall be peace, and her exactors righteousness*, *Isa.* lx. 16, 17. This at least reacheth to all we have ascribed to them. All is but bowing the knee of magistracy at the name of Jesus.

Hence are these positions.

III. The providing, or granting of places requisite for the performance of that worship, which in the Gospel is instituted, is the duty of the Christian magistrate.

IV. Protection as to peace and quietness, in the use of the ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, from violent disturbers, either from without or within; is also incumbent on him.

V. Supportment and provision as to earthly things, where regularly failing, is of him required.

And in the neglect of any of these that takes place, which is threatned, *Isa.* lx. 12. Two or three *Conseñtaries* added hereunto shall close this part of the magistrate's power or rather duty about the things of religion. As,

Conseñtary 1. Positive actings by way of supportment and assistance, maintenance, allowance of publick places, and the like, in the behalf of persons deviating from the truth, in those things wherein they deviate, is contrary to the rule of the word, and duty of them in authority. For,

Error hath neither right, nor promise, nor is any precept given in the behalf thereof.

Conf. 2. The defence and protection of erring persons from violence and injury, in those things wherein they have a right, is no acting of his duty about religious things, but a mere dealing for the preservation of humane society, by the defence of persons not acting against the rules thereof ^b.

^b For this cause the Emperors of old still allowed the Novatians the liberty of worship.

Conf. 3. Every particular, minute difference among the professors of the truth cannot be proved to come under the cognizance of the magistrate, he being to attend the worship which for the main is acceptable to God in Christ; neither do any testimonies extend his duty any farther. Hence

Corollary 1. The present differences about Church society, and the subject, or seat of discipline, which are between those *dissenters*, who are known by the names of *Presbyterians*, and *Independents*, as they are in themselves (not heightened by the prejudices, lusts, corruptions, and interests of men) hinder not at all, but that the magistrate is bound to the performance of the duties before mentioned unto both parties. And the reasons of this are, because

Reason 1. The things wherein they are agreed are clearly as broad, as the magistrate's duty can be stretch'd to cover them.

Reasf. 2. Neither party, I am persuaded, in their retired thoughts dare avow the main of the worship by their dissenters embraced, to be, as such, rejected of the Lord.

Reasf. 3. No example in the world can be produced out of the Old Testament, or New, or ecclesiastical history, of a forcible decision of such minute differences. See *Socrat. Eccles. Hist. lib. 6. cap. 20.*

Corol. 2. All the plea of persons erring in doctrine, or worship, is not from what the magistrate must do, but from what he may not do.

And this for the first part shall suffice.

2. There is another part of the magistrate's power, the other side of his sword, to be exercised towards the opposition of that truth which he hath embraced.

And this hath a twofold object.

(1.) Things.

(2.) Persons.

(1.) Things are of two sorts:

[1.] Ways of worship.

[2.] Outward appearances, monuments, accommodations, and declarations of those ways.

Of the *first* I shall speak afterwards.

By the *second* I mean all the outward attendances of any false or erroneous worship, which are either helps to, or declarations of the superstition, idolatry, error, or falseness of it: as temples for idolatrous service, crosses, pictures, and the like abused reliicks of old unwarranted zeal. Now concerning these I affirm,

1.) That the magistrate ought not to make provision of any publick places, for the practice of any such worship, as he is convinced to be an abomination unto the Lord. When I say he ought not to make provision, I understand not only a not actual caring that such be, but also a caring that such may not be. He should not have a negation of acting as to any thing of publick concernment. His not opposing here is providing. For instance: He must not allow, that is, it is his duty to oppose, the setting apart of publick places under his protection, for the service of the mass (as of late in *Somerset house*) or for any kind of worship in itself disallowed, because not required, and so not accepted. This were to be bound to help forward sin, and that such sin whereof he is convinced, which is repugnant to the whole revealed will of God. A magistrate, I told you before, is not to act according to what he may do, but what he must do. Now it cannot be his duty to further sin.

2.) Outward monuments, ways of declaring and holding out false and idolatrous worship, he is to remove: as the papists images, altars, pictures, and the like; *Turks* mosques; prelates service book. Now these are of two sorts:

(1. Such things as in their whole use and nature serve only for the carrying on of worship in itself wholly false, and merely invented: as altars, images, crosses.

(2. Such as were used for the carrying on of worship true in itself, though vilely corrupted, as praying, and preaching: such are those places commonly called Churches.

The first are to be abolished, the latter aright used. I speak as to publick appearances, for private disquisitions after such things I may be otherwise minded. The reason of this difference is evident to all.

Thus in days of old, *Constantine* shut up pagans temples, *Euseb. De vita Constant. lib. 4. cap. 23, 24.* and demolished some of the most filthy of them, *lib. 3. cap. 52.*

D d d d

Theodosius

Theodosius utterly cast them to the ground, though not without some blows and bloodshed, *Socrat. Eccles. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 16.* The command of God for the abolishing all monuments of idolatry, *Deut. xii. 1, 2, 3.* with the commendation of those Kings of *Judah*, who accordingly performed this duty, *2 Chron. xvii. 6.* and *xxx. 14.* are enough to confirm it, and to bottom this position.

VI. It is the duty of the magistrate not to allow any publick places for (in his judgment) false and abominable worship, as also to demolish all outward appearances and demonstrations of such superstitious, idolatrous, and unacceptable service.

Let *Papists* who are idolaters, and *Socinians* who are *anthropolatræ*, plead for themselves.

(2.) Now for persons there seems something more of difficulty; yet certain clear rules may be proposed concerning them also, to hold out when they and their proceedings come under the cognizance of the civil magistrate, and are obnoxious to the sword which he beareth. And they are these:

[1.] Such persons, as having embraced any false principles and persuasion in, or about things concerning God and his worship, do pursue the upholding or propagating of such principles, in a disorderly manner to the disturbance of civil society, are doubtless under his restraining power, to be acted and put forth in such ways, as to other persons, running out into the same, or the like compass of disorder, upon other grounds, and from the instigation of other lusts. The pretence of disturbance and confusion, upon the bearing with differences in opinion about things commanded in religion, we before rejected, as a colour fitted chiefly for the wearing of persecution. But actual disturbances indeed must have actual restraints. For instance: If a man being persuaded that the power of the magistrate is in Christian religion groundless, unwarrantable, unlawful, should thereupon stir up the people to the abolishing, and removal of that power, such stirrings up, and such actings upon that instigation, are as opposite to the Gospel of Christ (which opposeth no lawful regimen among the sons of men) so also prejudicial to humane society, and therefore to be proceeded against by them, who bear not the sword in vain. This case we know happened once in *Germany*, and may do so again in other places. If such as these suffer, it is *as murderers, or thieves, or evil doers, or busy bodies in other mens matters*; which is a shameful thing, no way commendable or praise worthy, *1 Pet. iv. 15.*

[2.] If any persons whatsoever, under any pretence whatsoever, shall offer violence or disturbance to the professors of the true worship of God, so owned, established, and confirmed as abovesaid; in and for the profession of that true, so owned worship, service, and declaration of the mind of God; such persons are to fear that power, which is the minister of God, and a revenger to them that do evil. Let us suppose of them, what they suppose, and for their own justification and support in irregular ways bear out of themselves, that they enjoy the truth, others walking in paths of their own; yet then this practice is contrary to that prime dictate of nature, which none can pretend ignorance of, *viz. Do not that to another which thou wouldst not have done unto thyself.* If men that would not think it equitable to be so dealt with, as they deal with others, supposing themselves in their conditions, do yet so deal with them, they are *αὐτοκατακρίτοι*, and do pronounce sentence against themselves, out of their own mouths. This then deserveth punishment, and breaking out to the disturbance of publick order, ought to be punished. We before proved the protection of publick places to belong to the magistrate; so that he not only may, but if he will not be false to him, by whom he is entrusted, he must put forth his authority for the safe guarding and revenging of them. Yea also and this rule may pass, when some things in the way publickly established are truly offensive. What the ancient Christians thought of the zeal of *Audas*, a Christian bishop, who would needs demolish a pagan temple in *Persia*, I know not; but I am sure his discretion is not much extolled, who by that one fiery act of destroying *πυρᾶον*, that is, *a temple of fire* (for the *Persians* look'd upon fire as a god, as the historian observes) occasioned a cruel persecution of thirty years continuance. *Theod. Eccles. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 38.*

[3.] When any have entertained any singular opinion, in matters of great weight and importance, such as nearly concern the glory of God, and the minds of Christians in reverence of his holy name are most tenderly affected withal, so that with-

out

out much horror of mind they can scarce hear those errors, whereby those grand truths are opposed; yet those persons, who have entertained such uncouth opinions, shall not be content so to have done, and also in all lawful ways (as to civil society) endeavoured to propagate the said opinions to others, but in the pursuit of this their design of opposing truth, shall publicly use such expressions, or perform such acts, as are fit to pour contempt and scorn upon the truth which they do oppose, reviling it also, or God himself so represented, as he is in the truth they abominate, with odious and execrable appellations (as for instance, the calling the Holy Trinity, *Tricipitem Cerberum*) if the question be put, whether in this case the magistrate be not obliged to vindicate the honour of God by corporal restraints, in some degrees at least, upon the persons of those men, truly, for my part, I incline to the affirmative. And the reason hereof is this: Though men, through the incurable blindness of their minds falling into error of judgment, and misinterpretation of the word, may disbelieve the deity of Christ, and the holy Spirit; yet that any pretence from the word, persuasion of conscience, or dictate of religion, should carry them out to reviling, opprobrious speeches of that, which of God is held out contrary to their apprehensions, is false and remote from reason itself. For this cause *Paul* says he was a blasphemer, not because being a Jew he disbeliev'd the Gospel; but because so disbelieving it, he moreover loaded the truths thereof with contumelious reproaches. Such expressions indeed differ not from those piercing words of the holy name of God, which he censured to death, *Lev. xxiv. 15.* but only in this, that there seemeth in that to be a plain opposition unto light, in this not so. The like may be said of a Jew's crucifying a dog.

[4.] There are a sort of persons termed in Scripture, ἀτακτοί, 1 *Thes. v. 14.* ἀτακτοί, *Acts xvii. 5.* ἀτοκοί, 2 *Thes. iii. 2.* ἀναπότακτοί, 1 *Tim. i. 9.* and the like, *disorderly, vagabond, wandering, irregular* persons, fixed to no calling, abiding in no place, taking no care of their families, that under a pretence of teaching the truth without mission, without call, without warrant, uncommanded, undesired, do go up and down, from place to place, creeping into houses, &c. Now that such ways as these, and persons in these ways, may be judicially enquired into, I no way doubt. The story is famous of *Sesostris* King of *Egypt*, who made a law, that all the subjects of his kingdom should once a year give an account of their way and manner of living, and if any one were found to spend his time idly, he was certainly punished; and the laws of most nations have provided that their people shall not be wanderers, and whosoever hath not a place of abode, and employment, is by them a punishable vagabond. And in this by much experience of the ways, walking, and converse of such persons, I am exceedingly confirmed in. I did as yet never observe any other issue upon such undertakings, but scandal to religion, and trouble to men in their civil relations.

[5.] When men by the practice of any vice or sin draw others to a pretended religion, or by pretence of religion draw men to any vice or known sin, let them be twice punished, for their real vice, and pretended religion. The truth is, I have been taught exceedingly to disbelieve all the strange imputations of wickedness and uncleanness, that are imposed upon many, to be either the end or the medium of the practice of that communion in religion, which they do profess and embrace. I remember that when I was a boy, all those stories were told me of *Brownists* and *Puritans*, which afterward I found to have been long before the forgeries of *Pagans*, and imposed on the primitive Christians. I dare boldly say, I have heard stories of them an hundred times, holding out that very thing, and those deeds of darkness, which *Minutius Felix* holds out in the tongue of an infidel concerning the Christians of those days; but yet because sundry venerable persons, to whom antiquity hath given sanctuary from being arraigned in the point of false testimony, have left it upon record of sundry hereticks in their days, as the *Gnosticks* and others, that they were conjoined into *societates tessera pollutionis*, and some assert that the like iniquities are not wholly buried; I made the supposition, and hope that if they depose themselves from common sense and reason, the magistrate will never exalt them to the privilege and exemption of religion.

In these, and such like cases as these, when men shall break forth into disturbance of common order and enormities against the light of nature, beyond all positive command of any pretended religion whatsoever, that the magistrate ought to set hedges

of thorns in their ways, sharpened according to their several delinquencies, I suppose no man not abhor'd of common sense can once hesitate, or doubt. And I am the more inclin'd to assert a restraint to all such as these, because it may be established to the height, without the least prejudice unto the truth, though persons erring should enjoy the place of authority.

3. That which now remaineth in this head to be considered is, concerning persons maintaining and upholding any great and pernicious errors, but in such ways, as are not by any of the former disorders to be brought under the cognizance of the civil magistrate, but good, honest, allowable, and peaceable in themselves, not at all to be questioned, but in reference to the things that are carried on in and by those ways: as communication by discourse, and private preaching, and the like.

Now concerning these it is generally affirmed, That persons maintaining any error in or against any fundamental article of faith, or religion, and that with obstinacy or pertinacy, after conviction, ought to be proceeded against by the authority of the civil magistrate, whether unto death or banishment, imprisonment or confiscation of goods.

(1.) Now unto this, supposing what I have written heretofore, concerning the incompetency of all, and the non-constitution of any judge in this case, with the answers given at the beginning of this treatise to most of the places produced usually for the affirmative, I shall briefly give in my thoughts; reserving the consideration of pressing conformity to the next head to be handled. And,

[1.] That I cannot but observe, that in the question itself there are sundry things gratis assumed. As,

1.) That it is known and confessed, what articles in religion are fundamental, and this also to the magistrate; when no one thing among Christians is more questionable, most accounting them so (be they what they will) wherein they differ from others. So that one way or other, all *dissenters* shall be hooked in, directly or indirectly to clash upon fundamentals. In this *Papists* are secure, who make the Church's propositions sufficient to make an article fundamental.

2.) That the persons holding the error are convinced, when perhaps they have been only confuted, between which two there is a wide difference. He that holds the truth may be confuted, but a man cannot be convinced but by the truth. That a man should be said to be convinced of a truth, and yet that truth not shine in upon his understanding, to the expelling of the contrary error, to me is strange. To be convinced is to be overpower'd by the evidence of that, which before a man knew not. I myself once knew a scholar invited to a dispute with another man, about something in controversy in religion; in his own, and in the judgment of all the by-standers, the opposing person was utterly confuted: and yet the scholar within a few months, was taught of God, and clearly convinced, that it was an error which he had maintained, and the truth which he opposed; and then, and not 'till then did he cease to wonder, that the other person was not convinced by his strong arguments, as before he had thought. May not a Protestant be really worsted in a dispute by a Papist? hath it not so e're now fallen out? If not, the Jesuites are egregious liars. To say a man is convinced, when either for want of skill and ability, or the like, he cannot maintain his opinion to and against all men, is a mere conceit. The truth is, I am so far from this morose severity of looking upon all erring persons as convinced, that have been confuted; that I rather in charity incline to believe, that no erring person, whilst he continues in his error, is convinced. It will not easily enter into my dull apprehension, how a man can be convinced of an error, that is enlightned with a contrary truth, and yet hold that error still. I am loth to charge more corrupt and vile affections upon any, than do openly appear. That of *Paul*, affirming that some men are self-condemned, is quite of another nature. I think a person is said to be convinced, not when there is a sufficiency in the means of conviction, but when there is such an efficacy in them, as to lay hold upon his understanding.

3.) That they are obstinate and pertinacious is also a cheap supposal, taken up without the price of a proof. What we call obstinacy, they call constancy; and what we condemn them for as pertinacy, they imbrace as perseverance. As the conviction is imposed, not owned, so is this obstinacy; if we may be judges of other mens obstinacy, all will be plain; but if ever they get uppermost, they will be

judges of ours. Besides, I know not what good it will do us, or how it will advantage our cause, to suppose men obstinate and convinced, before we punish them, no such qualifications being any where in the book of God tised in persons deserving punishment: if they have committed the crime, whereunto the penalty is annexed, be they obstinate or not, they shall be punished.

[2.] But now supposing all this, that we are clear in all fundamentals, that we are convinced that they are convinced, and doubt not but that they are obstinate; if they keep themselves in the former bounds, what is to be done? I say, besides what we spake at the entrance of this discourse, I shall as to any ways of corporal coaction and restraint, oppose some few things.

1.) The non-constitution of a judge in case of heresy, as a thing civilly criminal. As to spiritual censures, and an ecclesiastical judgment of errors, and false doctrines, we find them appointed, and a lawful judge as to the determining concerning them, divinely instituted; so that in such ways they may be warrantably proceeded against, *Rev. xxi. 3.* But now, for any judge that should make disquisition concerning them, or proceed against them as things criminal, to be punished with civil censures, I conceive the Scripture is silent. And indeed, who should it be? The custom of former ages was, that some persons of one sort should determine of it as to right, *viz.* that such or such a thing was heresy, and such or such a one an heretick; which was the work of priests and prelates: and persons of another sort should *de facto* punish, and determine to be punished, those so adjudged by the former, and these were, as they called them, the secular magistrates, officers of this world. And indeed, had not the *God of this world blinded their eyes*, and the *God of the spirits of all flesh hardened their hearts*, they would not have so given up their power to the man of sin, as to be made so sordidly instrumental to his bloody cruelty. We read, *Jer. xxvi. 10, 11.* that the priests and prophets assemble themselves in judgment, and so pronounce sentence upon the prophet *Jeremy*, that he should die for a false prophet, *ver. 12.* *Jeremy* makes his appeal to the secular magistrate, and all the people, who taking cognizance of the cause, pronounce sentence in the behalf of the condemned person, against the priests and prophets, and deliver him whether they will or not, *ver. 16.* I spare the application of the story: but that princes and magistrates should without cognizance of the thing, or cause, proceed to punishment or censure of it, upon the judgment of the priests condemning such or such a man for an heretick, or a false prophet, blessed be the Lord, we have no warrant. Had this proceeding been regular, *Jeremy* had died without mercy for a false prophet, as thousands since standing before the Lord in his spirit have done. This course then, that the civil magistrate should proceed to sentence of corporal punishment upon others judging of the fault, is vile, sordid, unwarrantable, and exceedingly unworthy of any rational man, much more such as are set over the people of the land. That the same persons must determine of the cause, and appoint the punishment is clear.

Now who must these be?

(1. Are they the ministers of the Gospel? Of all others they are the most likely to be the most competent Judges in spiritual causes; let it be so: but then also, they must be the determiners and inflictors of the punishment upon default; now let them pour out upon obstinately erring persons all the vengeance that God hath entrusted them withal, *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, &c.* By this course, admonition, avoiding, rejection, excommunication, will be the utmost that can be inflicted on them: which for my part I desire may be exercised to the utmost extent of the rule.

(2. Shall the magistrate be made judge of the cause, as well as of the person? is he entrusted to determine what is error, what not; what heresy, what not; who is an heretick, who not; and so what punishment is due to such and such errors, according to the degrees wherein they are?

1.] I desire an institution of this ordinance in the Church. Where is the magistrate entrusted with such a power? Where are rules prescribed to him, in his proceedings?

2.] Is not a judiciary determination concerning truth and error (I mean truths of the Gospel) a mere Church act? and that Church power, whereby it is effected?

Must not then the magistrate, *quâ talis*, be a Church officer? Will men of this mind tolerate *Erastianism*?

3.] If there be a twofold judicature appointed for the same person, for the same crime, is it not because one crime may in divers respects fall under several considerations? and must not these considerations be preserved immixed, that the formal reason of proceeding in one court may not be of any weight in the other? We proved before, and it is granted of all, that the Church is judge in case of heresy and error, as such, to proceed against them, as contrary to the Gospel: their opposition to the faith delivered to the saints, is the formal reason upon which that proceedeth to censure: if now this be afterwards brought under another sentence, of another judicature, must it not be under another consideration? Now what can this be, but its disturbance of civil society, which when it doth so, not in pretence, but really and actually, none denies it to be the magistrate's duty to interpose with his power.

4.] If the magistrate be judge of spiritual offences, and it be left to him to determine, and execute judgment in such proportion as he shall think meet, according to the quality and degrees thereof; it is a very strange and unlimited arbitrariness over the lives and estates of men: and surely they ought to produce very clear testimonies, that they are entrusted from the Lord herewith, or they can have no great quiet in acting.

5.] It seems strange to me, that the Lord Jesus Christ should commit this *architectonical* power in his house unto magistrates, foreseeing of what sort the greatest number of them would be, yea, determining that they should be such, for the trial and affliction of his own. View the times that are past, consult the stories of former ages, take a catalogue of the Kings and rulers that have been, since first magistrates outwardly embraced Christian religion in this and other nations, where the Gospel hath been planted; and ask your own consciences whether these be the men, to whom this high trust in the house of God is committed? The truth is, they no sooner left serving the dragon in the persecution of the pagans, but presently in a very few years, they gave up their power to the beast, to set up another state in opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ and his Gospel, in the supportment whereof, the most of them continue labouring 'till this very day. *Hæ manus Trojam exigent?* What may be added in this case, I refer to another opportunity.

2.) Gospel constitutions in the case of heresy or error seems not to favour any course of violence, I mean of civil penalties. Foretold it is, that heresies must be, 1 Cor. xi. 19. but this for the manifesting of those that are approved, not the destroying of those that are not; I say destroying, I mean with temporal punishment, that I may add this by the way; for all the arguments produced for the punishment of hereticks, holding out capital censures, and these being the tendance of all beginnings in this kind, I mention only the greatest, including all other arbitrary penalties being but steps of walking to the utmost censures. Admonitions, and excommunication upon rejection of admonition, are the highest constitutions (I suppose) against such persons: *Waiting with all patience upon them that oppose themselves, if at any time God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.* Imprisoning, banishing, slaying is scarcely a *patient waiting*. God doth not so wait upon unbelievers. Perhaps those who call for the sword on earth, are as unacquainted with their own spirits, as those that call'd for fire from heaven, *Luke xi.* And perhaps the parable of the tares gives in a positive rule as to this whole business: occasion may be given of handling it at large; for the present I shall not fear to assert, that the answers unto it, borrowed by our divines from *Bellarmino*, will not endure the trial. We hope that spiritual quiet, and inoffensiveness in the whole mountain of the Lord, which is wrapt up in the womb of many promises, will at length be brought forth to the joy of all the children of *Sion*.

3.) Sundry other arguments taken from the nature of faith, heresy, liberty of conscience, the way of illumination, means of communication of truth, nature of spiritual things, pravitous tendence of the doctrine opposed, if it should be actually embraced by all enjoying authority, and the like, I thought at present to have added; but I am gone already beyond my purposed resting place.

(2.) Come we in a few words to the last thing proposed (wherein I shall be very brief, the main of what I intended being already set down) the power of the magistrate

gistrate to compel others to the embracing of that religion and way of worship, which he shall establish and set up: which for the greater advantage we shall suppose to be the very same, both for the things proposed to be believed, and also practised, which God himself hath revealed, and requireth all men every where to embrace. What is to be done for the settling and establishing of the profession of the Gospel, and the right apprehension of the mind of God therein, contra-distinct from all those false and erroneous persuasions, which in these, or former days are, or have been held forth in opposition thereunto, was before declared; how it is to be supported, maintained, protected, defended, safe-guarded from all oppositions, disturbances, blasphemings, was then and there set down.

Now supposing that sundry persons, living under the power, and owning civil obedience to the magistrate, will not consent to sound doctrine, nor receive in some things (fewer or more, less or greater) that *form of wholesome words*, which he holds forth, and owns as the mind of Christ in the Gospel, nor communicate with him in the worship, which by the authority of those words, or that truth, he hath as before established, it is enquired, What is the duty of the magistrate, in reference to the bringing of them into that subjection, which is due unto, and an acknowledgment of the truth?

And to this I shall briefly give in my answer in these following positions.

[1.] In reference unto us, in this nation, the greatest difficulty in giving a full return to this question ariseth from the great disorder of the Churches of God amongst us. Were the precious distinguished from the vile, Churches rightly established, and Church discipline exercised, that Christians were under some orderly view, and men might be considered in their several capacities wherein they stand, an easy finger would untie the knot of this quare. But being in that confusion wherein we are, gathering into any order being the great work in hand, I suppose, under favour, that the time is scarce come for the proposal of this question: but yet something may be given in unto it, tho' not so clear, as the former supposal being effected would cause it to be.

[2.] The constant practice of the Churches in former ages, in all their meetings for advice and counsel, to consent into some form of wholesome words, that might be a discriminating *tessera* of their communion in doctrine, being used in prime antiquity, as is manifest in that ancient symbol, commonly esteemed apostolical, of the chief heads whereof mention in the like summary is made in the very first writers among them, having also warrant from the word of God, and being of singular use to hold out unto all other Churches of the world our apprehensions of the mind of God in the chief heads of religion, may be considered. If this be done by the authority of the magistrate, I mean, if such a declaration of the truth, wherein the Churches by him owned and protected do consent, be held out as the confession of that truth which he embraceth, it will be of singular use unto, yea indeed must necessarily precede any determination of the former question. Of the nature and use of confessions, &c. so much hath of late been learnedly disputed, that I shall not pour out any of mine own conceptions for the present about them, in that hasty, tumultuary manner, wherein I am enforced to expose this essay.

[3.] Those who dissent from the truth so owned, so established, so decreed, do so either in less matters of small consequence, and about things generally confessed not fundamental; or in great and more weighty heads of doctrine, acts of worship, and the like: both agreeing in this, that they will not hold communion as either to all, or some parts and duties thereof, which those Churches and persons who do embrace the truth so owned, as before, and act accordingly.

1.) For the first of these, or such as dissent about things of no great concernment, in comparison of those other things wherein they do agree with them from whom they do dissent, I am bold positively to assert, that, saving and preserving the rules and qualifications set down under the second head, the magistrate hath no warrant from the word of God, nor command, rule, or precept to enable him to force such persons to submit unto the truth as by him established, in those things wherein they express a conscientious dissent; or to molest them with any civil penalty in case of refusal, or non-submission: nor yet did I ever in my life meet with any thing in the shape of reason to prove it, altho' the great present clamour of this nation is punctually

punctually as to this head: whatever be pretended, this is the *Helena* about which is the great contest.

What I pray will warrant him then to proceed? Will the laws against idolatry and blasphemy, with their sanctions towards the persons of blasphemers, and idolaters (for I must ingenuously confess, all that which in my poor judgment looks with any appearance of pressing toward *Hereticidium*, is the everlasting equity of those judicial laws; and the arbitrariness of magistrates from a divine rule in things of the greatest concernment, to the glory of God if free from them, and that these laws I doubt will scarcely be accommodated unto any thing under contest now in this age of the world among Christians) but shall I say, a warrant taken from hence for the compelling of men sound in so many fundamentals, as were it not for the contest with them we would acknowledge sufficient for the entertainment of the Lord Jesus in their bosoms, to subject to, and close with the things contrary to their present light and apprehension (though under a promise of being taught of God) or to inflict penalties upon a refusal so to do? *Credat Apella*.

Shall the examples of extraordinary judgments upon idolaters, false prophets, by sword and fire from heaven, on magicians, apostates, and the like, be here produced? Though such arguments as these have made thousands weep tears of blood, yet the consequence in reason cannot but provoke laughter to all men not wholly forsaken of directing principles.

What then shall be done, they'll say? they have been admonished, rebuked, convinced, must they now be let alone?

Something as to this I shall add, in the close of this discourse; for the present let learned *Whitaker* answer for me. And first to the first, of their being confuted: *Possunt quidem controversiæ ad externum forum deferri, & ibi desiniri; sed conscientia in eo foro non acquiescit, non enim potest conscientia sedari sine Spiritu sancto*. Let controversies (saith he) be determined how you please, until the conscience be quieted by the holy Spirit, there will be little peace. Unto which I shall not add any thing, considering what I said before of conviction. And to the latter, of letting them alone to their own ways: *Ecclesiæ quidem optatius est levibus quibusdam dissensionibus ad tempus agitari, quam in perfida pace acquiescere; non ergo sufficit aliquo modo pacem conservari, nisi illam esse sanctam pacem constiterit*, *Whit. com. 4. de Rom. Pont. qu. 1. cap. 1. sect. 2.* Better some trouble, than a perfidious compell'd peace: See him handle this more at large, with some excellent conclusions to this purpose, *Con. 4. de Rom. Pont. qu. 1. cap. 1. sect. 19. pa. 48. & 50.*

For these then (and under this head I compare all such persons, as keeping in practice within the bonds before laid forth do so far forth hold the foundation, as that neither by believing what is not, or disbelieving what indeed is, they do take in, or keep off, any such thing as wherewithal being embraced, or without which being rejected, the life of Christ cannot in any case possibly consist, nor salvation by him be obtained) as the magistrate is not bound by any rule or precept to assist and maintain them, in the practice of those things wherein they dissent from the truth, so he is bound to protect them in peace and quietness, in the enjoyment of all civil rights and liberties; nor hath he either warrant or allowance to proceed against them, as to the least penalty, for their dissent in those things they cannot receive. Attempts for uniformity among saints, or such as for ought we can conclude, either from their opinions or practices may be so, by external force are purely antichristian.

2.) Now for those that stand at a greater distance from the publickly owned and declared truths, such as before we spake of, the orderly way of dealing with such is, in the first place to bring them off from the error of the way, which they have embraced; and until that be done, all thoughts of drawing in their assent to that, from which at such a distance they stand, is vain and bootless. Now what course is to be taken for the effecting of this? Spiritual ways of healing are known to all, let them be used, and in case they prove fruitless, for ought that yet I can perceive, the person of men so erring must be left in the state and condition we described under the second head.

And now to drive on this business any farther by way of contest I will not; my intention at the beginning was only positively to assert, and to give in briefly the scriptural and rational bottoms, and proofs of those assertions; wherein I have gone aside, to pull or thrust a line of debate, I have transgressed against my own purpose, I hope

it will be pardoned: though I am heartily desirous any thing which passeth my pen, may be brought to the test, and myself reduced where I have gone amiss; yet my spirit faints within me, to think of that way of handling things in controversy, which some men by reciprocation of answers and replies have wound themselves into. *Bolseete*, and *Staphylus*, and *Stapleton* seem to live again, and much gall from beneath to be pour'd into mens ink. Oh, the deep wounds the Gospel hath receiv'd by the mutual keen invectives of learned men! I hope the Lord will preserve me from being engaged with any man of such a frame of spirit. What hath been asserted may easily be cast up in a few positions, the intelligent reader will quickly discern what is aimed at, and what I have stood to avow.

If what is proposed be not satisfactory, I humbly offer to the Honourable Parliament, that a certain number of learned men, who are differently minded as to this business of toleration, which almost every where is spoken against, may be desired and required to a fair debate of the matter in difference before their own assembly; that so, if it be possible, some light may be given to the determination of this thing, of so great concernment in the judgments of all men, both on the one side and on the other, that so they may *try all things, and hold fast that which is good*.

Corol. 1. That magistrates have nothing to do in matters of religion, as some unadvisedly affirm, is exceedingly wide from the truth of the thing itself.

Corol. 2. Corporal punishments for simple error were found out to help to build the tower of *Babel*.

*Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.*

* S E R M O N XXXII.

ΟΤΡΑΝΩΝ ΟΤΡΑΝΙΑ.

The Shaking and Translating of Heaven and Earth.

To the Right Honourable the COMMONS of *England* assembled in Parliament.

SIRS,

AL L that I shall preface to the ensuing discourse is, that seeing the nation's welfare and your own actings are therein concerned (the welfare of the nation, and your own prosperity in your present actings, being so nearly related as they are to the things of the ensuing discourse) I should be bold to press you to a serious consideration of them as now presented unto you, were I not assured by your ready attention unto, and favour-

* This Sermon was preached to the Honourable House of Commons in Parliament assembled, on April 19. 1649. A Day set apart for extraordinary Humiliation.

able acceptation of their delivery, that being now published by your command, such a request would be altogether needless. The subject matter of this sermon being of so great weight and importance as it is, it had been very desirable, that it had fallen on an abler hand; as also that more space and leisure had been allotted to the preparing of it, first for so great, judicious, and honourable an audience, and secondly for publick view, than possibly I could beg from my daily troubles, pressures, and temptations, in the midst of a poor, numerous, provoking people. As the Lord hath brought it forth, that it may be useful to your Honourable Assembly, and the residue of men that wait for the appearance of the Lord Jesus, shall be the sincere endeavour at the throne of grace of

Coggeshal, May 1.
1649.

Your most unworthy Servant,

In the Work of the Lord,

J. OWEN.

HEB. xii. 27.

And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

THE main design of the Apostle in this Scripture to the *Hebrews*, is to prevail with his countrymen, who had undertaken the profession of the Gospel, to abide constant and faithful therein, without any apostasy unto, or mixture with *Judaism*, which God and themselves had forsaken; fully manifesting, that in such *backsliders the soul of the Lord hath no pleasure*, chap. x. 38.

A task which whoso undertaketh in any age, shall find exceeding weighty and difficult, even to persuade professors to hold out, and continue in the glory of their profession unto the end, that *with patience doing the will of God, they might receive the promise*^a; especially if there be *Lions in the way*^b, if opposition or persecution do attend them in their professed subjection to the Lord Jesus. Of all that deformity and dissimilitude to the divine nature which is come upon us by the fall, there is no one part more eminent, or rather no one defect more evident, than inconstancy and unstableness of mind, in embracing that which is spiritually good. Man being turned from his unchangeable rest^c, seeks to quiet and satiate his soul with restless movings towards changeable things. Now he who *worketh all our works for us, and in us*, Isa. xxvi. 12. *worketh them also by us*^d; and therefore that which he will give, he persuades us to have, that at once his bounty, and our duty, may receive a manifestation in the same thing. Of this nature is perseverance in the faith

^a Chap. x. 36. ^b Prov. xxii. 13. xxvi. 13. ^c Psal. cxvi. 7. ^d 1 Thef. i. 3. 2 Thef. i. 11.
Deut. x. 16. chap. xxx. 6. Ezek. xviii. 31. chap. xxxvi. 26. Acts xi. 18.

of Christ, which as by him it is promised, and therefore is a grace; so to us it is prescribed, and thereby is a duty. *Petamus ut det, quod ut habeamus jubet, August.* Let us ask him to bestow, what he requires us to enjoy. Yea, *Da, Domine, quod jubes, & jube quod vis: Give what thou commandest, and command what thou pleasest.*

As a duty it is by the Apostle here considered, and therefore pressed on them, who by nature were capable, and by grace enabled for the performance thereof. Pathetical exhortations then unto perseverance in the possession of the Gospel, bottomed on prevalent scriptural arguments, and holy reasonings, are the sum of this Epistle.

The arguments the Apostle handleth unto the end proposed are of two sorts.

First, Principal.

Secondly, Deductive, or emergencies from the first.

First, His principal arguments are drawn from two chief fountains.

1. The Author: and

2. The nature and end of the Gospel.

1. The Author of the Gospel is either,

(1.) Principal and immediate, which is God the Father, *Who having at sundry times and in divers manners formerly spoken by the prophets, herein speaketh by his Son,* chap. i. 1.

(2.) Concurrent and immediate, Jesus Christ, *this great salvation being begun to be spoken to us by the Lord,* chap. ii. 3. This latter he chiefly considereth, as in and by whom the Gospel is differenced from all other dispensations of the mind of God. Concerning him to the end intended he proposeth,

[1.] His person.

[2.] His employment.

[1.] For his person, that thence he may argue to the thing aimed at, he holdeth out,

1.) The infinite glory of his deity: being the *brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person,* chap. i. 3.

2.) The infinite condescension of his love, in assuming humanity, for because *the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same,* chap. ii. 14.

And from the consideration of both these, he presseth the main exhortation which he hath in hand, as you may see, chap. ii. 1, 2. chap. iii. 12, 13, &c.

[2.] The employment of Christ he describeth in his offices, which he handleth

1.) Positively, and very briefly, chap. i. ii, iii.

2.) Comparatively, insisting chiefly on his priesthood, exalting it in sundry weighty particulars above that of Aaron, which yet was the glory of the Jewish worship, and this at large, chap. vi, vii, viii, ix, x. And this being variously advanced and asserted, he layeth as the main foundation, upon which he placeth the weight and stress of the main end pursued, as in the whole Epistle is every where obvious.

2. The second head of principal arguments he taketh from the Gospel itself, which considering as a covenant he holdeth out two ways:

(1.) Absolutely, in its efficacy in respect of,

[1.] Justification. In it *God is merciful to unrighteousness and sins, and iniquities he remembers no more,* chap. viii. 12. *Bringing in perfect remission, that there shall need no more offering for sin,* chap. x. 17.

[2.] Sanctification. *He puts his laws in our hearts, and writes them in our minds,* chap. x. 16. in it, *Purging our consciences by the blood of Christ,* chap. ix. 14.

[3.] Perseverance. *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people,* chap. viii. 10.

All three are also held out in sundry other places.

(2.) Respectively to the covenant of works, and in this regard assigns unto it principal qualifications, with many peculiar eminencies them attending, too many now to be named. Now these are,

[1.] That it is new. He saith a *new covenant, and hath made the first old,* chap. viii. 13.

[2.] Better. It is a *better covenant, and built upon better promises,* chap. viii. 6, vii. 22.

[3.] Surer, the priest thereof being ordained, *not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life*, chap. vii. 16.

[4.] Unalterable. So in all the places before named, and sundry others.

All which are made eminent in its peculiar Mediator Jesus Christ, which is the sum of chap. vii.

And still in the holding out of these things, that they might not forget the end for which they were now drawn forth, and so exactly handled, he interweaves many pathetical entreaties, and pressing arguments by way of application, for the confirming and establishing his countrymen in the faith of this glorious Gospel, as you may see almost in every Chapter.

Secondly, His arguments less principal, deduced from the former, being very many, may be referred to these three heads:

1. The benefits by them enjoyed under the Gospel.
2. The example of others, who by faith and patience obtained the promises, chap. xi.
3. From the dangerous and pernicious consequence of backsliding, of which only I shall speak. Now this he setteth out three ways.

(1.) From the nature of that sin. It is a *crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame*, chap. vi. 6. *a treading under foot the Son of God, counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace*, chap. x. 29.

(2.) The irremediable punishment which attends that sin. *There remains no more sacrifice for it, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation that shall consume the adversaries*, chap. x. 26, 27.

(3.) The person against whom peculiarly it is committed, and that is he who is the Author, Subject, and Mediator of the Gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ: concerning whom for the aggravation of this sin, he proposeth two things.

[1.] His goodness and love, and that in his great undertaking to be a Saviour, being *made like unto his brethren in all things, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people*, chap. ii. 17. And of this there is a sweet and choice line running through the whole discourse, making the sin of backsliding against so much love and condescension appear exceeding sinful.

[2.] His greatness or power, which he sets out two ways.

1.) Absolutely, as he is *God to be blessed for ever*, chap. i. and *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, chap. x. 31.

2.) Comparatively, as he is the Mediator of the new covenant in reference to *Moses*. And this he setteth forth, as by many and sundry reasonings in other places of the *Epistle*, so by a double testimony in this xiith Chapter, making that inference from them both, which you have ver. 25. *See that you refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him who spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him who speaketh from heaven*.

Now the first testimony of his power is taken from a record of what he did heretofore; the other from a prediction of what he will do hereafter.

The first you have ver. 26. in the first part of it: *His voice then shook the earth: then*, that is, when the law was delivered by him, as it is described, ver. 18, 19, 20. foregoing. When the mountain upon which it was delivered, the mediator *Moses* into whose hand it was delivered, and the people for whose use it was delivered, did all shake and tremble at the voice, power, and presence of Christ^c; who, as it hence appears, is that *Jehovah* who gave the law, *Exod. xx. 2*.

The other in the same verse is taken from a prediction out of *Haggai ii. 16*. of what he will do hereafter; even demonstrate and make evident his power, beyond what ever he before effected: *He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also the heavens*.

And if any one shall ask, wherein this effect of the mighty power of the Lord Jesus consisteth, and how from thence professors may be prevailed upon to keep close to the obedience of him in his kingdom? The Apostle answers, ver. 27. *And*

^c Exod. xix. 18, 19. Chap. xx. 18.

this word yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

And thus am I stepped down upon the words of my text, finding them in the close of the arguments drawn from the power of Christ, to persuade professors to constancy in the paths of the Gospel: and having passed through their coherence, and held out their aim and tendance, their opening and application comes now to be considered.

And herein these three things:

I. The Apostle's assertion: *The things that are shaken shall be removed, as things that are made.*

II. The proof of this assertion: *This word, once more, signifieth no less.*

III. His inference from this assertion thus proved: *The things that cannot be shaken must remain.*

I. In the first I shall consider,

1. What are *the things that are shaken.*

2. What is their *shaking.*

3. What their *removal* being shaken.

1. For the first, there is great variety of judgment amongst interpreters^f. The foregoing *verse* tells us it is *not only the earth, but the heaven also*: but now what *heaven* and *earth* this should be is dubious, is not apparent. So many different apprehensions of the mind of God in these words, as have any likeness of truth, I must needs recount and remove, that no prejudice may remain from other conceptions, against that which from them we shall assert.

(1.) The *earth*, say some, is the men of the earth, living thereon: and the *heavens* are the angels, their blessed inhabitants: both *shaken*, or stricken with amazement upon the nativity of Christ, and preaching of the Gospel. The heavens were shaken, when so great things were accomplished, as that *the angels themselves desired to look into them*, 1 Pet. i. 12. And the earth was filled with amazement when the Holy Ghost being poured out upon the Apostles for the preaching of the Gospel, men of every nation under heaven were amazed, and marvelled at it. Acts ii. 5, 6, 7. Thus *Rollocus*, *Piscator*, and sundry other famous divines. But,

[1.] The shaking here intimated by the Apostle, was then when he wrote under the promise, not actually accomplished, as were the things by them recounted: for he holds it forth as an issue of that great power of Christ, which he would one day exercise for the farther establishment of his kingdom.

[2.] This that now is to be done must excel that which formerly was done at the giving of the law, as is clearly intimated in the inference: *Then he shook the earth, but now the heavens also*. It is a gradation to an higher demonstration of the power of Christ, which that the things of this interpretation are, is not apparent.

[3.] It is marvellous these learned men observed not, that the *heavens and the earth shaken*, ver. 26. are *the things to be removed*, ver. 27. Now how are angels and men removed by Christ? Are they not rather gathered up into one spiritual body and communion^g? Hence, ver. 27. they interpret the shaken things to be Judaical ceremonies, which ver. 26. they had said to be men and angels.

(2.) Others by *heaven* and *earth* understand the material parts of the world's fabric, commonly so called: and by their *shaking*, those portentous signs and prodigies, with earthquakes, which appeared in them at the birth and death of the Lord Jesus. A new star, preternatural darkness, shaking of the earth, opening of graves, renting of rocks, and the like, are to them this shaking of heaven and earth^h. So *Junius*, and after him most of ours. But this interpretation is obnoxious to the same exceptions with the former, and also others: For,

^f Nescio an facilius hic locus fuisset, si nemo eum opposuisset, Mald. ad Luc. ii. 34.

^g Ephes. i. 10. Ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι, i. e. μίαν κεφαλὴν παροσχὼν ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὸ Χριστόν; ἀπιστοῦνται γὰρ ὅτι οἱ ἀγγέλοι καὶ ἄνθρωποι, Oecumen. in Loc.

^h Matth. ii. 2. Matth. xxvii. 45. Luke xxiii. 44, 45. Matth. xxvii. 51, 52.

[1.] These things being past before, how can they be held out under a promise?

[2.] How are these shaken things removed, which with their shaking they must certainly be, as in my text?

[3.] This shaking of heaven and earth is ascribed to the power of Christ as Mediator, whereunto these signs and prodigies cannot rationally be assigned; but rather to the sovereignty of the Father, bearing witness to the nativity and death of his Son: so that neither can this conception be fastned on the words.

(3.) The fabrick of heaven and earth is by others also intended, not in respect of the signs and prodigies formerly wrought in them; but of that dissolution, or as they suppose alteration, which they shall receive at the last day. So *Paræus*, *Grotius*, and many more. Now though these avoid the rock of holding out as accomplished what is only promised, yet this gloss also is a dress disfiguring the mind of God in the text. For,

[1.] The things here said to be *shaken*, do stand in a plain opposition to the things that *cannot be shaken*, nor *removed*; and therefore they are to be removed, that these may be brought in. Now the things to be brought in, are the things of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. What opposition, I pray, do the material fabrick of heaven and earth stand in to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus? doubtless none at all, being the proper seat of that kingdom.

[2.] There will on this ground be no bringing in of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, until indeed that kingdom in the sense here insisted on is to cease, that is, after the day of judgment, when the kingdom of grace shall have place no more.

Those are the most material and likely mistakes about the words. I could easily give out, and pluck in again three or four other warping senses, but I hope few in these days of accomplishing will once stumble at them.

(4.) The true mind of the spirit, by the help of that spirit of truth, comes next to be unfolded. And first what are the things that are shaken?

[1.] As the Apostle here applies a part of the prophecy of *Haggai*, so that prophecy even in the next words gives light into the meaning of the Apostle. Look what heaven and earth the prophet speaks of, of those and no other speaks the Apostle. The spirit of God in the Scripture is his own best interpreter^k. See then the order of the words as they lie in the prophet: *Hag. ii. 6, 7. I will shake heaven and earth: I will shake all nations.* God then shakes heaven and earth, when he shakes all nations: that is, he shakes the heaven and earth of the nations. *I will shake heaven and earth, and I will shake all nations*, is a pleonasm, for, *I will shake the heaven and earth of all nations.* These are the things shaken in my text.

The heavens of the nations, what are they? even their political heights and glory, those forms of government which they have framed for themselves and their own interest, with the grandeur and lustre of their dominions. The nations earth is the multitudes of their people, their strength and power, whereby their heavens, or political heights are supported. It is then neither the material heavens and earth, nor yet *Mosaical* ordinances; but the political heights and splendor, the popular multitudes and strength of the nations of the earth, that are thus to be shaken, as shall be proved.

That the earth in prophetic descriptions or predictions of things is frequently, yea almost always taken for the people and multitudes of the earth, needs not much proving^l. One or two instances shall suffice. *Rev. xii. 16. The earth helped the woman against the flood of the dragon*, which that it was the multitudes of earthly people, none doubts. That an earthquake, or shaking of the earth, are popular commotions, is no less evident from *Rev. xi. 13.* where by an earthquake great *Babylon* receives a fatal blow. And for the heavens, whether they be the political heights of the nations, or the grandeur of potentates, let the Scripture be judge; I mean, when used in this sense of shaking, or establishment. *Isa. li. 15, 16. I am*

^l Ο γδ βλέπει τις, τί κ' ἐλπίζει, Rom. viii. 24.

^k *Nunquam Pauli sensum ingredieris, nisi Pauli Spiritum imbiberis*, Bér. Ser. de Monte. Τὸ αὐτὸ χρίσμα διδάσκει ἡμᾶς περὶ πάντων, 1 John ii. 27. Ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ νοούμεναι καὶ ἀπολογούμεναι αἱ γράφαι δικαίως ἡμῖν τοῖς Χριστοῖς, ἐκόντως θυρωρὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, Theophylac. in Joh. x.

^l Psal. lxviii. 8. Hab. ii. 20. Matth. xxiv. 7. 1 Sam. xiv. 25.

the Lord thy God who divided the sea, whose waves roared: the Lord of hosts is his name. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Sion, Thou art my people. By a repetition of what he hath done, he establisheth his people in expectation of what he will do. And,

1.) He minds them of that wonderful deliverance from an army behind them, and an ocean before them, by his miraculous preparing dry paths for them in the deep: *I am the Lord who divided the sea, whose waves roared.*

2.) Of his gracious acquainting them with his mind, his law, and ordinances at Horeb. *I have put (saith he) my words in thy mouth.*

3.) Of that favourable and singular protection afforded them in the wilderness, when they were encompassed with enemies round about: *I covered thee in the shadow of mine hand.*

Now to what end was all this? Why, saith he, that *I might plant the heavens, and lay the foundation of the earth.* What, of these material visible heavens and earth? Two thousand four hundred and sixty years before at least were they planted and established. It is all but making of *Zion a people*, which before was scattered in distinct families. And how is this done? Why the heavens are planted, or a glorious frame of government and polity is erected amongst them, and the multitudes of their people are disposed into an orderly commonwealth, to be a firm foundation and bottom for the government amongst them. This is the heavens and earth of the nations which is to be shaken in my text.

Isa. xxxiv. 4. All the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their hosts shall fall down as the leaf falleth from the vine. Now these dissolved, rolled heavens are no other but the power and heights of the opposing nations, their government and tyranny, especially that of *Idumea*, as both the foregoing and following verses do declare. *The indignation of the Lord (saith he) is upon the nations, and his fury upon their armies, he hath delivered them to the slaughter, their slain &c. Jer. iv. 23, 24, 25. I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void: and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.* Here's heaven and earth shaken, and all in the raising of the political state and commonwealth of the Jews by the *Babylonians*, as is at large described in the verses following: *Ezek. xxxii. 7. I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark. I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. And all the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God.* Behold heaven and earth, sun, moon, and stars, all shaken and confounded, in the destruction of *Egypt*, the thing the prophet treats of, their kingdom and nation being to be ruin'd.

Not to hold you too long upon what is so plain and evident, you may take it for a rule, that in the denunciations of the judgments of God, through all the prophets, *heavens, sun, moon, stars*, and the like appearing beauties and glories of aspectable heavens, are taken for governments, governors, dominions in political states, as *Isa. xiv. 12, 13, 14, 15. Jer. xv. 9. chap. li. 25. m*

Furthermore, to confirm this exposition, *St. John* in the *Revelation* holds constantly to the same manner of expression. *Heaven and earth* in that book are commonly those which we have described. In particular, this is eminently apparent, *chap. vi. 12, 13, 14, 15. And I beheld, and when he had opened the sixth seal, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth: And the heaven departed, as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places, &c.* The destruction and wasting of the pagan *Romish* state, the plagues and commotions of her people, the dethroning her idol worship, and destruction of persecuting emperors and captains, with the transition of power and sovereignty from one sort to another, is here held out under this grandeur of words ⁿ, being part of the shaking of heaven and earth in my text.

^m *Isa. xiii. 13. Psal. lxxviii. 8. Joel ii. 10. Rev. viii. 12. Matth. xxiv. 29. Luke xxi. 25. Isa. lx. 20. Obad. 4. Rev. viii. 13. Chap. xii. 12. Chap. xx. 11.*

ⁿ *Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 9. cap. 8. 10. lib. 8. cap. 27. De vita Constant. lib. 1. cap. 50, 51, 52.*

Add lastly hereunto, that the promises of the restoration of God's people, into a glorious condition after all their sufferings, is perpetually in the Scripture held out under the same terms, and you have a plentiful demonstration of this point. *Isa. lxxv. 17, 18. Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into my mind. Be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create, &c.* *2 Pet. iii. 13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.* *Rev. xxi. 1. I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.* The heaven and earth is restored, but the sea that shall be no more. Those gatherings together of many waters, rivers from all places ^p, or pretended clergymen from all nations, into general councils, which were the sea or many waters on which the whore sat ^q, shall have no place at all in the Church's restored condition.

I hope it is now fully cleared, what is meant by the things that are shaken: even the political heights, the splendor and strength of the nations of the earth, the foundation of the whole is laid, and our heap (or building if your favour so accept it) will go on apace; for to the analogy hereof shall the residue of the words be interpreted.

2. The second thing considerable is: What is the shaking of these things?

To this the answer is now made brief and facile. Such as are the things shaken, such must their shaking be: spiritual, if spiritual; natural, if natural; civil, if civil. Now they being declared and proved to be civil things, such also is their shaking. Now what is a civil shaking of civil constitutions? how are such things done in the world? what are these earthquakes? Truly the accomplishment hereof is in all nations so under our eyes, as that I need not speak one word thereunto.

Neither shall I insist upon the enquiry, when this shaking shall be.

The text is plain, that it must be previous to the bringing in of those things that cannot be moved, that is, the prosperous estate of the kingdom of Christ. Only we may observe, that besides other shakings in particular nations of less general concernment and importance, this prophesy hath and shall receive a twofold eminent accomplishment, with reference unto a twofold eminent opposition, which the kingdom of Christ hath met withal in the world.

(1.) From the pagan *Roman* state, which at the Gospel's first entrance held in subjection most of the chief provinces of the then known world ^v. What were the bloody endeavours of the *heaven and earth* of that state for the suppression thereof is known to our children. The issue of the whole in the accomplishment of this promise, shaking those heavens and earth to pieces, I before pointed at from *Rev. vi. 12, 13, 14, 15.* beginning in the plagues of the persecuting Emperors, and ending in the ruin of the empire itself. But,

(2.) The immoveable things were not yet in their glory to be brought in. More seed of blood must be sown, that the end of the Gospel's year may yield a plentiful harvest. That shaking was only for vengeance upon an old, cursed, and not for the bringing in of a new, blessed state. The vials of God's wrath having crumbled the heavens and earth of pagan *Rome* into several pieces ^w, and that empire being removed as to its old form, by the craft of Satan it became moulded up again into a papal sovereignty, to exercise all the power of the first beast, in persecution of the saints, *Rev. xiii. 12.* This second pressure though long and sore must have an end; the new moulded heaven and earth of papal antichristian *Rome*, running by a mysterious thread through all the nations of the *West*, must be shaken also: which when it is accomplished there shall be no more sea. There is not another beast to arise, nor another state to be formed; let endeavours be what they will, the Lord Jesus shall reign ^x.

3. What is the removal of heaven and earth, being shaken?

^o *Isa. lxxvi. 22, 23, 24.*

^p *Gen. i. 10.*

^q *Rev. xvii. 1.*

^r *Matth. xxiv. 6, 7.* *Jer. iv. 19.*

Isa. ix. 5.

^s *Χρόνος καὶ καιρὸς, ὁ πατὴρ ἔδωκεν ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ, Acts i. 7.*

^t *Σεισμοὶ κατὰ τόπους, Matth. xxiv. 7.*

^v *Ἐξῆλθε δόγμα καὶ καὶνῶς Ἀντώνη, ἀπογεγραμμένον πᾶσι τῇ οἰκουμένῃ, Luke ii. 1.*

^w *τὸ κατεῖχον, 2 Ephes. ii. 6.*

^x *Rev. xviii. 2. Isa. lx. 12. Psal. ii. 6.*

The word here translated *removal*, is μεταδίδωμι: whence that is come to pass, I dare not positively say. This doubtless is a common fault amongst translators, that they will accommodate the words of a text to their own apprehension of the sense and matter thereof. Understanding, as I suppose, that the things here said to be shaken were the *Jewish* ordinances, they translated their disposition, a *removal*; as the truth is they were removed. But the word signifies no such thing. As its natural importance from its rise and composition is otherwise, so neither in the Scripture, or any profane Author, doth it ever signify properly a *removal*. *Translation*, or *changing*, is the only native, genuine import of it: and why it should in this place be haled out of its own sphere, and tortured into a new signification, I know not. *Removal* is of the matter, *translation* of the form only. It is not then a destruction, and total amotion of the great things of the nations; but a change, translation, and a new moulding of them, that is here intimated. They shall be shuffled together almost into their primitive confusion, and come out new moulded for the interest of the Lord *Jesus*. All the present states of the world are cemented together by antichristian lime, as I shall shew afterwards: unless they be so shaken as to have every cranny searched and brushed, they will be no quiet habitation for the Lord Christ, and his people. This then is the μεταδίδωμι of the *Heaven and Earth* of the nations.

Now this is evident, from that full prediction which you have of the accomplishment hereof, *Rev. xvii. 12. the kingdoms of the west receive power at one hour with the beast. Ver. 13. in their constitution and government at first received, they give their power to the beast, and fight against the Lamb. Ver. 14. the Lamb with his faithful and chosen ones overcomes them. There their heaven and earth is shaken. Ver. 16. their power is translated, new moulded, and becomes a power against the beast, in the hand of Jesus Christ.*

This then is the *shaking* and *removal* in my text, which is said to be, *as of things that are made*: that is, by men, through the concurrence of divine providence for a season (which making you have, *Rev. xvii. 12, and 17.*) not like the kingdom of Christ, which being of a purely divine constitution, shall by no humane power receive an end.

The other parts of the text follow briefly.

II. The next thing is the Apostle's proof of this assertion. And he tells you, *This word, once more*, the beginning of this sentence he urged from the prophet, *signifies no less.*

The words in the prophet are, *עַד אֶחָד מֵעַתָּה הָיָה, yet once, it is a little, עַד אֶחָד מֵעַתָּה, it is a little*, is left out by the Apostle, as not conducing to the business in hand. *Ετι ἄπαξ*, as he rendreth *עַד אֶחָד מֵעַתָּה*, are a sufficient demonstration of the assertion. In themselves they hold out a commutation of things, and as they stand in conjunction in that place of the prophet, declaring that, that *shaking* and commutation must be for the bringing in of the kingdom of the Lord Christ. In brief, being interpreted by the same spirit whereby they were indited, we know the exposition is true.

III. The last head remaineth under two particulars.

I. What are the things that cannot be shaken.

2. What is their remaining.

1. For the first, the things that cannot be shaken, *ver. 24. are called a kingdom that cannot be removed, ver. 28. a kingdom subject to none of those shakings and alterations, which other dominions have been tossed to and fro withal. Daniel calls it, A not giving of the kingdom to another people. Dan. ii. 44. Not that eccumenical kingdom which he hath with his Father, as King of nations; but that economical kingdom which he hath by dispensation from his Father as King of saints. Now this may be considered two ways.*

(1.) As purely internal and spiritual, which is the rule of his spirit in the hearts of all his saints. This cometh not with observation, it is within us, *Luke xvii. 20, 21. consisting in righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17.*

(2.) As external, and appearing in Gospel administrations. So is Christ described

^y Heb. xi. 5. Jude 4. Gal. i. 6. Heb. vi. 18. Heb. vii. 12.

^a Mutationem, Trem. Translacionem, Erasim. Ar. Mont.

^b Psal. ii. 6. Psal. cx. 2. Acts. ii. 36. Rev. i. 18. 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, 26, 27.

^c Luke. vi. 20. Mark. xii. 34. &c. Psal. xlv. 6. Psal. cxlv. 13. Isa. ix. 7. Obad. 21.

as a king in the midst of their kingdom, *Rev. i. 14, 15, 16, 17.* as also *chap. iv.* and *chap. xi. 15.* And both these may be again considered two ways.

[1.] In respect of their essence and being: and so they have been, are, and shall be continued in all ages. *He hath built his Church upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, Matth. xvi. 18.*

[2.] In reference to their extent in respect of subjects, with their visible glorious appearance, which is under innumerable promises to be very great in the latter days. *For it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it, Isa. ii. 4.*

These then are the things which cannot be shaken, which we may reduce to three heads.

1.) The growth of righteousness, peace, and joy in the saints, being filled with light and love from the special presence of Christ, with a wonderful increase of the number of them, multitudes of the elect being to be born in those days, the residue of the Jews and fulness of the Gentiles meeting in one fold, and there dwelleth righteousness, 2. *Pet. iii. 13.*

2.) The administration of Gospel ordinances, in power and purity, according to the appointment, and unto the acceptance of the Lord Jesus. *The temple of God and the altar being measured anew, the outward court defiled with Gentile-worship is left out, Rev. xi. 1, 2.*

3.) The glorious and visible manifestation of those administrations, in the eyes of all the world, in peace and quietness, none making afraid, or hurting in the whole mountain of the Lord, *Isa. lxv. 25.*

For the personal reign of the Lord Jesus on earth, I leave it to them, with whose discoveries I am not, and curiosities I would not be acquainted.

But as for such, who from hence do, or for sinister ends pretend to fancy to themselves a terrene kingly state unto each private particular saint, so making it a bottom *vivendi ut velis*, for every one to do that which is good in his own eyes, to the disturbance of all order and authority, civil and spiritual, as they expressly clash against innumerable promises, so they directly introduce such confusion and disorder, as the soul of the Lord Jesus doth exceedingly abhor.

It is only the three things named, with their necessary dependencies, that I do assert.

2. And lastly, of these it is said they must remain: that is, continue, and be firmly established, as the word is often used, *Rom. ix. 11.*

The words of the text, being unfolded, and the mind of the holy Ghost in them discovered, I shall from them commend to your Christian consideration this following position.

Observation, *The Lord Jesus Christ by his mighty power, in these latter days, as antichristian tyranny draws to its period, will so far shake and translate the political heights, governments, and strength of the nations, as shall serve for the full bringing in of his own peaceable kingdom; the nations so shaken, becoming thereby a quiet habitation for the people of the most High.*

Though the doctrine be clear from the text, yet it shall receive farther scriptural confirmation, being of great weight and concernment. *Dan. ii. 44. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.* That this is affirmed of the kingdom of Christ under the Gospel, none ever doubted.

Three things are here remarkably intimated of it.

1. The time wherein it shall most eminently be established: and that is, in the days of these kings, of which Daniel was speaking.

2. The efficacy of its being set up: *It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms.*

3. Its own stability: *It shall never be destroyed.*

^a *Isa. xi. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Chap. xviii. 18, 19. Chap. xxx. 18, 19. Micah. iv. 1.*
^b *Isa. xlix. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. Chap. liv. 2, 3, &c. v. 14, 12. Chap. lx. 16, 17. Ezek. xlviii. 35.*
Amos. ix. 11. Rom. xi. 15, &c. Isa. xlix. 22, 23. Chap. lvi. 21. Mal. iii. 9. Ezek. xliii. 30, 31.
Rev. xxi. 3. Chap. liv. 11, 12, 13, &c. Zach. xiv. 9, 10, 11. Acts iii. 21.

1. For the first, there is great debate about the principal season of the accomplishing of this prediction: much hesitation who those kings are, in whose days the kingdom of Christ is eminently to be established. In the days when the two legs of the *Roman* empire shall be divided into ten kingdoms, and those kingdoms have opposed themselves to the power of Christ, that is, in the days wherein we live, say some. Yea most of the ancients took this for the *Roman* empire, and to these the bringing in of the kingdom of Christ is the establishment of it in these days: others understand the *Syrian* and *Egyptian* branches of the *Grecian* monarchy, and the bringing in of Christ's kingdom to be in his birth, death, and preaching of the Gospel, wherein certainly the foundations of it were laid. I will not contend with any mortal hereabouts. Only I shall oppose one or two things to this latter interpretation. As,

(1.) The kingdom of *Syria* was totally destroyed and reduced into a *Roman* province sixty years before the nativity of Christ: and the *Egyptian* thirty. So that it is impossible that the kingdom of Christ by his birth should be set up in their days.

(2.) It is ascribed to the efficacy of this kingdom, that being established it shall break in pieces all those kingdoms: which how can it be, when at the first setting of it up, they had neither place, nor name, nor scarce remembrance?

So that it must needs be the declining, divided *Roman* empire, shared among sundry nations, that is here intimated: and so consequently the kingdom of Christ to be established, is that glorious administration thereof, which in these days, he will bring in.

2. Be it so or otherwise, this from hence cannot be denied, that the kingdom of Christ will assuredly shake and translate all opposing dominions, until it self be established in and over them all, *ὅτι ἐπὶ πάντων ἐσθλὰ*, which is all I intend to prove from this place. The ten-partite empire of the west must give place to the stone cut out of the mountains without hands.

Dan. vii. 27. *The kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High: whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter.* Either antichrist is described in the close of this chapter, or one very like him, St. John painting him in the *Revelation* with all this man's colours, plainly intimating, that though in the first place that mad, raging tyrant *Antiochus the illustrious* was pointed at, yet that another was to rise in his likeness, with his craft and cruelty, that with the assistance of the ten horns should plague the saints of the Christians, no less than the other had done those of the Jews. Now what shall be the issue thereof? *His dominion with his adherents shall be taken away, and consumed*, ver. 26. And then shall it be given to the people of the most High, as before. Or they shall enjoy the kingdom of Christ in a peaceable manner, their officers being made peace, and their exactors righteousness.

3. It is clearly evident from these and other places in that prophecy, that he who is the only potentate will sooner or later shake all the monarchies of the earth, where he will have his name known, that all nations may be suited to the interest of his kingdom which alone is to endure.

Isa. lx. In many places, indeed throughout, holds out the same, ver. 12. *The nation and kingdom which will not serve thee, shall be broken to pieces: that is, all the nations of the earth, not a known nation, but the blood of the saints of Christ is found in the skirts thereof.* Now what shall be the issue when they are so broken?

Ver. 17. 18. *I will make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders, but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise.* See at your leisure to this purpose, *Amos* ix. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. *Jer.* xxxi. 23, 24, 25. *Isa.* xxxiii. 21, 22, 23, 24.

I shall only add that punctual description, which you have of this whole matter, as *Daniel* calls it, in the *Revelation*, with respect unto its accomplishment. Chap. xvii. the *Roman* harlot having procured the ten kings or kingdoms, into which the last head of the *Roman* empire sprouted about the year four hundred and fifty, by the inundation of the northern nations to join with her, they together make war against the Lamb. ver. 12. *The ten horns which thou sawest upon the last head*

of the great beast the *Roman monarchy*) are ten kings, which have received no kingdoms as yet (to wit, when *John* saw the vision) but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. About four hundred years after this, the Pope ascended to his sovereignty, and these western nations grew into distinct dominions about the same time. Ver. 13. *These have one mind* (that is, as to the business in hand, for otherwise they did and do vex one another with perpetual broils and wars) and shall give their power and strength to the beast, or swear to defend the rights of holy Church, which is no other than *Babylon*, and act accordingly. Ver. 14. *These make war with the Lamb* (having sworn and undertaken the defence of holy Church, or *Babylon*, they persecuted the poor hereticks with fire and sword, that is, the witnesses of the Lamb, and in them the Lamb himself, striving to keep his kingdom out of the world) and the Lamb shall overcome them (shaking and translating them into a new mould and frame) for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with him (whose help and endeavours he will use) are called, and chosen, and faithful. Ver. 16. *The ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast* (being now shaken, changed, and translated in mind, interest, and perhaps government) these hate the whore, and shall make her desolate (are instrumental in the hand of Christ for the ruin of that Antichristian State, which before they served) and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

Hence Chap. xviii. 2. *Babylon*, and that whole antichristian state, which was supported upon their power and greatness, having lost its props comes toppling down to the ground: *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen*. And the saints take vengeance on the whore for all her former rage and cruelty: *Double unto her double according to her works*, ver. vi. And ver. ix. *And the kings of the earth* (being some of them shaken out of their dominion for refusing to close with the Lamb) who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her (learning and practising false worship of her institution) shall bewail her, and lament for her (as having received succour from her, her monasteries and shavelings, in their distress, whereunto indeed they were brought for her sake) when they shall see the smoke of her burning, beholding her darkness, stink and confusion, in her final desolation.

Now all this shall be transacted with so much obscurity and darkness, Christ not openly appearing unto carnal eyes, that though many shall be purified and made white, yet the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand, Dan. xii. 10. There shall be no such demonstration of the presence of Christ, as to open the eyes of hardened men: but at length having suffered the poor deceived wretches to drink of the cup prepared for them, he appears himself gloriously, Chap. xix. 13. In a more eminent manner than ever before, to the total destruction of the residue of opposers. And that this will be the utmost close of that dispensation wherein now he walketh, I no way doubt.

The assertion being cleared and proved, the reasons of it come next to be considered. And,

(1.) It shall be done by the way of recompence and vengeance. *It is the great day of the wrath of the Lamb*, Rev. vi. 17. *The land shall be soaked with blood, and the dust made fat with fatness*. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompence for the controversy of Zion, Isa. xxxiv. 7. 8. *The day of vengeance is in his heart, when the year of his redeemed is come*, Isa. lxiii. 4. 8.

The kings of the earth have given their power to antichrist, endeavouring to the utmost to keep the kingdom of Christ out of the world. What, I pray, hath been their main business for seven hundred years and upwards, even almost ever since the man of sin was enthroned? how have they earned the titles, *Eldest Son of the Church*, *the Catholick and most Christian King*, *Defender of the Faith*, and the like? Hath it not been by the blood of saints? Is there not in every one of these kingdoms the slain, and the banished ones of Christ to answer for? In particular,

Hath not the blood of the saints of *Jesus*^b (eclipsed by Antichrist and his adherents) *Wickliffes* and *Lollards*, cried from the ground for vengeance upon the *English* heaven and earth for a long season? Did not their bodies lye in the

^a Psal. ii. 4, 5. Psal. cxxvii. 8, 9. Isa. xlvii. 1, 2, 3. Isa. xlix. 26. Jer. l. 33, 34. Chap. li. 24, 25, 34, 35. Zech. xii. 2, 3, 4. Chap. xiv. 12. Rev. xviii. 6, &c.

^b Acts & Mon. Histor. Pap.

streets of *France*, under the names of *Waldenses*, *Albigenses*, and poor men of *Lyons*? Hath not *Germany*, and the annexed Territories, her *Husse* and *Hussle*, *Hierome* and *Subtraguians* to answer for? Is not *Spain's Inquisition* enough to ruin a world, much more a kingdom? Have not all these, and all the kingdoms round about, washed their hands and garments in the blood of thousands of protestants? And do not the kings of all these nations as yet stand up in the room of their progenitors with the same implacable enmity to the power of the Gospel? Shew me seven Kings that ever yet laboured sincerely to enhance the kingdom of the Lord *Jesus*, and I dare boldly say, *Octavus quis fuerit nondum constat*. And is there not a cry for all this; *How long, Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that live on the earth?* Rev. vi. 16. Doth not *Sion* cry: *The violence done to me and my flesh be upon Babylon: and my blood upon those heavens* of the nations? And will not the Lord avenge his elect, that cry unto him day and night, will he not do it speedily? Will he not call the *foes* of heaven to eat the flesh of Kings, and captains, and great men of the earth? Rev. xix. 18. Will he not make these heavens like the wood of the vine, nor a pin to be taken off them to hang a garment on, in his whole tabernacle? The time shall come, wherein the earth shall disclose her slain, and not the simplest heretick (as they were counted) shall have his blood unrevenged: neither shall any atonement be made for this blood, or expiation be allowed, whilst a toe of the image, or a bone of the beast is left unbroken.

(2.) A second reason is, That by his own wisdom he may frame such a power, as may best conduce to the carrying on of his own kingdom among the sons of men¹.

He hath promised his Church, that he will give unto it holy priests and levites, *Isa.* lxvi. 20, 21. which shall serve at the great feast of tabernacles, *Zech.* xiv. 18. (a sufficient demonstration that he will dwell still in his Churches by his ordinances whatsoever some conceive) so also, *That he will make her civil officers peace, and her exactors righteousness*, *Isa.* lx. 17, 18. They shall be so established, that the nations, as nations, may serve it, and the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, *Rev.* xi. 15.

For the present, the government of the nations (as many of them as are concerned therein) is purely framed for the interest of antichrist. No kind of government in *Europe*, or line of governors so ancient, but that the beast is as old as they, and had a great influence into their constitution or establishment, to provide that it might be for his own interest. I believe it will be found a difficult task, to name any of the kingdoms of *Europe* (excepting only that remotest northward) in the setting up and establishment whereof, either as to persons or government, the Pope hath not expressly bargained for his own interest, and provided that should have the chiefest place in all the oaths and bonds that were between princes and people. *Belarmine*, to prove that the Pope hath a temporal power indirectly over all Kings and nations (if he mean by indirectly, gotten by indirect means, it is actually true as to too many of them²) gives sundry instances in most of the most eminent nations in *Europe*, how he hath actually exercised such a power for his own interest³.

There have been two most famous and remarkable changes of the government of these nations, and into both of them what an influence the Pope had, is easily discernable.

The first was between the years four and five hundred after Christ, when the *Roman* empire of the *West*, that which withheld the man of sin from acting his part to the life⁴, was shivered to pieces by many barbarous nations⁵, who settling themselves in the fruitful soils of *Europe*, began to plant their heavens, and lay the foundations of their earth, growing up into civil states, for the most part appointing them to be their kings in peace, who had been their leaders in war. This furious inundation settled the *Franches* in *Gall*, the *Saxons* in *England*, the *West Goths* in *Spain*, the *East Goths* and *Longobards* into *Italy*, and set up the *Almans* in *Germany*; from some whereof, though for divers years the papal world was exceedingly tormented,

¹ *Psalm* ii. 9, 10, 11, 12. *Rev.* xvii. 14. *Matth.* xxviii. 20. *1 Cor.* xi. 26. *Ephes.* iv. 11, 12, 13. *1 Tim.* vi. 13, 14. *Psalm* xlv. 16. *Isa.* xlix. 7, 23.

² *Rev.* xviii. 3. *οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμεῖς ἀλλὰ οὗτος ὁ πόλις.*

³ *Bell. de Rom. Pon. lib. 5. cap. 8.*

⁴ *2 Thes.* ii. 6, 7.

⁵ *Dan.* ii. 41.

and *Rome* itself sacked, yet in the close and making up of their governments, changing their manners and religion, they all submitted to the usurpation of the man of sin, so that in all their windings up, there was a salve for him and his authority.

The second great alteration took up a long space, and was in action about three hundred years, reckoning it from the translation of the *French* crown from *Chilrick* the fourth, unto *Pipin* and his son *Charles* by papal authority, unto the conquest of *England* by the *Normans*, in which space the line of *Charles* in *France* was again by the same authority, and the power of *Hugh Capet* cut off. No state in *Europe*, the choice patrimony of the beast, that did not receive a signal alteration in this space; nor was there any alteration, but that the Pope had a hand in every one of them, and either by pretended collations of right, to pacify the consciences of blood-thirsty potentates in the undertaking and pursuing their unjust conquests, or foolish mitred confirmations of sword purchases, he got them all framed to his own end and purpose, which was to bring all these nations into subjection to his *Babylonish* usurpations, which their Kings finding no way inconsistent with their own designs did willingly promote, labouring to enforce all consciences into subjection to the *Roman* See.

Hence it is, as I observed before, that such an interposition was made of the rites of holy Church, that is *Babylon* the mother of fornications, in all the ties, oaths, and bonds between princes and people. And for the advancement of the righteous judgments of God, that the sons of men may learn to fear and tremble before him, it may be observed, that that which doth, and shall stick upon potentates to their ruin, is not so much their own or any other interest, as the very dregs of this papal antichristian interest thrust into their oaths and obligations for no end in the world, but to keep the Lord *Jesus* out of his throne.

This is a second reason, why the Lord *Jesus*, by his mighty power at the bringing in of his immoveable kingdom, will shake the heavens and the earth of the nations; even because in their present constitution they are directly framed to the interest of antichrist, which by notable advantages at their first moulding, and continued insinuations ever since, hath so rivetted itself into the very fundamentals of them, that no digging, or mining, with an earthquake, will cast up the foundation stones thereof. The Lord *Jesus* then, having promised the service of the nations to his Church, will so far open their whole frame to the roots, as to pluck out all the cursed seeds of the mystery of iniquity, which by the craft of Satan, and exigencies of state, or methods of advancing the pride and power of some sons of blood, have been sown amongst them.

(3.) A third reason is, Because as is their interest, so is their acting. The present power of the nations stands in direct opposition to the bringing in of the kingdom of Christ. Two things there are which confessedly are incumbent on him in this day of his advancement,

[1.] The bringing home of his ancient people to be one fold with the fulness of the Gentiles, raising up the tabernacle of *David*, and building it as in days of old, in the accomplishment of innumerable promises; and in answer to millions of prayers, put up at the throne of grace, for this very glory in all generations. Now there be two main hinderances of this work that must be removed. The first whereof is,

1.) Real: the great river *Euphrates*, the strength and fulness of whose streams doth yet rage so high, that there is no passage for the Kings of the *East* to come over. Wherefore this must be dried up, as other waters were for their forefathers in days of old, *Rev.* xvi. 12. Doubtless this is spoken in allusion to *Abraham's* coming over that river into *Canaan*, when the Church of God in his family was there to be erected, whence he was called the *Hebrew*, that is, the passenger, to wit, over that river, *Gen.* xiv. 13. and then it may well enough denote the *Turkish* power, which, proud as it is at this day, possessing in peace all those regions of the *East*,

* Οὗτοι μίαν γλῶσσαν ἔχουσιν, καὶ τὴν δυνάμιν, καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν αὐτῶν τῷ θρῶνι διαδίδωσθαι, *Rev.* xvii. 13.

† *Rev.* xiii. 15, 16.

‡ Πίμπει αὐτοῖς ὁ θρῶνς ἐνέφεσιν πλάνης, 2 *Thef.* ii. 11.

§ Roma sedes Petri, quæ Pastoralis honoris,

Facta caput mundo quicquid non possidet armis,

Religione tenet. *Prosp. de Ingrat.*

¶ *John* x. 16. *Isa.* xxxvii. 31. *Jer.* xxx. 9. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 23. *Chap.* xxxvii. 24, 25. *Hos.* iii. 5. *Amos* ix. 11.

* *Exod.* xiv. 21, 22. *Josh.* iii. 15, 16. *Hab.* iii. 8.

yet God can quickly make it wither, and be dried up: or the deliverance of the *Jews* from *Babylon*, when it was taken and destroyed by the drying up of the streams of that river, and so the yoke of her tyranny broken from the Church's neck^v, and so it can be no other but the power of the *Romish Babylon*, supported by the Kings of the nations, which must therefore be shaken and dried up.

2.) Moral, or the idolatry of the Gentile worshipers^w. The *Jews* stick hard as yet at this, that God should abolish any kind of worship, which himself had once instituted: but that he should ever accept any false worship, which he had once strictly prohibited, and no where to this day appointed, to this they will never be reconciled. Now such is all the invented idolatrous worship, which the Kings of the earth have sucked in from the cup of fornication held out to them in the hand, and by the authority of the *Roman* whore; this still they cleave close unto, and will not hearken to the angel preaching the everlasting Gospel, that men should worship him who made the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters, Rev. xiii. 6, 7. that is, the God of heaven in *Jesus Christ*, in opposition to all their *Iconolatry*, *Artolatry*, *Hagiolatry*, *Staurolatry*, and *Mass-abominations*. This then must also be removed; and because as you saw before it is so rivetted and cemented into, and with all the orbs of the nations, heaven and earth, they must be shaken, and brought *his μυστήριον*, before it can be effected.

[2.] The second thing he hath to accomplish is the tremendous, total destruction of *Babylon*^x, the man of sin, and all his adherents, that are not obedient to the heavenly call, Rev. xviii. 4.^y Now as *Sampson*, intending the destruction of the princes, lords, and residue of the *Philistines*, who were gathered together in their idol temple, effected it by pulling away the pillars whereby the building was supported, whereupon the whole frame topled to the ground^z; so the Lord intending the ruin of that mighty power, whose top seems to reach to heaven, will do it by pulling away the pillars and supporters of it, after which it cannot stand one moment. Now what are the pillars of that fatal building? Are they not the powers of the world, as presently stated and framed? Pull them away, and, alas, what is antichrist? It is the glory of the Kings put upon her, that makes mens eyes so dazzle on the *Roman* harlot. Otherwise she is but like the *Egyptian* deities, whose silly worshipers through many glorious portals and frontispieces were led to adore the image of an ugly ape.

Add hereunto, that in this mighty work the Lord *Jesus Christ* will make use of the power of the nations, the horns of them, that is their strength, Rev. xvii. 16. They must hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. Now whether this can be accomplished or no in their present posture, is easily discernable. Doth not the papal interest lie at the bottom of all; or the most ruling lines of Christendom^a? Can that be ejected without unbottoming their own dominion? Do they not use the efficacy of the *Roman* jurisdiction to balance the powers of their adversaries abroad, and to awe their subjects at home? Hath not the Pope a considerable strength in every one of their own bosoms? Are not the locusts of their religious orders all sworn slaves to him, for number, sufficient to make an army to fight the greatest Emperor in the world? Are not most potentates tied by oath, or other compact, to maintain either the whole, or some part of the old tower, under the name of rites of holy Church, prelates, and the like? And can any expect that such as these should take up the despised quarrel of the saints against that flourishing queen? doubtless no such fruit will grow on these trees, before they are thoroughly shaken.

(4.) A fourth reason is, That his own people seeing all earthly things shaken, and removing, may be raised up to the laying hold of that durable kingdom that shall not be removed^b. All carnal interests will doubtless be shaken with that of *Babylon*. Many of God's people are not yet weaned from the things that are seen^c: no sooner is one carnal form shaken out, but they are ready to cleave to another, yea to warm themselves in the feathered nests of unclean birds. All fleshly dominion within doors, and all civil dominion that opposeth without doors, shall be shaken. Now these

^v Jer. li. 31, 32.

^w Rev. xi. 2.

^x Psal. cxxxvii. 8, 9. Isa. xlvii. 7, 8, 9.

^y Jer. li. 25, 26.

Rev. xvii. 1, 2. Zach. ii. 7. Jer. li. 6.

^z Judges xvi. 28, 29.

^a *Petra dedit Petro, Petrus diadema Rodulfo.*

^b Heb. xii. 28.

^c 2 Cor. iv. 18.

things are so glewed also to mens earthly possessions, the talons of the birds of prey having firmly seized on them, that they also must be shaken with them; and therefore from them also will he have us to be loosed, 2 *Pet.* iii. 12, 13.

And these are some of the reasons of the position laid down, which is so bottomed, so proved, as you have heard. Of the speedy accomplishment of all this I no way doubt. *I believe, and therefore I have spoken.* Whether I shall see any farther perfection of this work, whilst I am here below, I am no way solicitous; being assured that if I fail of it here, I shall, through the grace of him who loved us, and gave himself for us, meet with the treasures of it elsewhere.

Come we to the *Uses*.

Use 1. The rise of our first *Use* I shall take from that of the prophet: *Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein,* *Hos.* xiv. 9. Labour for this heavenly wisdom and prudence, that we may know these things, and be acquainted with the mind and will of God, in the season and generation wherein we live. His way is not so in the dark, nor his footsteps in the deep, but that we may perceive what he is about.

Luke xii. 54, 55, 56, our Saviour gives it in as a sure testimony of the *Pharisees* hypocrisy, notwithstanding all their pretences, and possession of *Moses* chair, that they were wise in earthly things, and had drawn out experiences by long observation of what was like to come to pass as to the weather, by considering the ordinary signs of the alterations thereof; but notwithstanding that mighty effectual concurrence of signs in heaven and earth, with the accomplishment of prophecies, all pointing to the instant establishment of the kingdom of God in the coming of the *Messiah*, not discerning them at all, they come and cry, *If thou be the Christ, give us a sign*, when without satisfying their sinful curiosity, heaven and earth was full of signs round about them. Men, who will not receive God's signs, suppose they should be wonderful proficient in credulity, might they have signs of their own fancying. The rich glutton thought, that if his way of teaching might have been set up, by men rising from the dead, there would have been a world of converts, more than were made by preaching the word of God^d. Men suppose, that if God from heaven should give in some discriminating prodigy, oh, how abundantly should they be satisfied! The truth is, the same lust and corruption that makes them disbelieve God's signs, moves them to look after signs of their own. For this very thing then were the *Pharisees* branded as hypocrites, that having wisdom in natural things, to calculate and prognosticate from necessary signs; yet in the works of the Lord, though the signs which in his wisdom he was pleased to give, were plentiful round about them, they must have some of their own choosing. I pray God none such be found in our day.

1 Chron. xii. 32. it is said of the men of *Issachar*, that they *had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do*^e. *Israel* is in the dark, and knows not what to do, if the times and seasons be not discovered to them. If the mind and will of the Lord in their generation be not made out unto a people, it will be their ruin. Hence it is, that the Lord encourageth us to make enquiry after these things, to find out the seasons wherein he will do any great work for his people, knowing that without this, we shall be altogether useless in the generation wherein we live. *Isa.* xlv. 11. *Ask of me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the works of my hands command you me.* And what is this, that the Lord will have his people to enquire of him about? Even the great work of the ruin of *Babylon*, and restoration of his Church, which yet was not to be accomplished for two hundred and forty years. And this he tells you plainly in the following verses. *I have raised him up (Cyrus) in righteousness, I will direct his ways, he shall build my cities, and he shall let go my captives, not for price, nor for reward, saith the Lord of hosts,* ver. 13. The Lord is earnest with his people to enquire into the season of the accomplishment of his great intendments for the good of his Church, when as yet they are afar off; how much more when they are nigh at hand, even

^d *ἔχοντες Μωϋσιν καὶ τὰς προφητείας, ἐν ᾗ πάντες Ἀβραάμ; ἀλλ' ἵνα τις ἀπὸ νεκρῶν παρυσθῇ, Luke* xvi. 29, 30.

^e *Esther* i. 13.

at the doors? *Whofo is wife, and will ponder thefe things, they fhall underftand the loving kindnefs of the Lord*, *Pfal. cvii. ult.* *Dan. ix. 2.* The prophet tells you, that this was his great ftudy, and at length he underftood by books the approach of the time, wherein God would deliver his Church from *Babylonifh* captivity and pollution. Now this difcovery hath two or three notable products.

(1.) It puts him upon earneft fupplications for the accomplifhment of their promifed deliverance in the appointed feafon. Wide from that atheiftical frame of fpirit, which would have a predetermination of events and fuccesses to eradicate all care and endeavour to ferve that providence, which will produce their accomplifhment. A difcovery of the approach of any promifed, and before fixed work of God, fhould fettle our minds to the utmoft endeavour of helping the decree to bring forth.

(2.) He finds great acceptance in this his addrefs to the Lord by fupplications, for the eftablifhing of that work which he had difcovered was nigh at hand. For,

[1.] An answer is returned him fully to his whole defire in the midft of his fupplications, *ver. 21.* *Whilst I was praying the man Gabriel came, &c.*

[2.] The work which he had difcovered to be approaching, was instantly haftned and gone in hand withal, *ver. 23.* *At the beginning of thy fupplications the commandment came forth.* Oh, that God would ftir up his faints, in the fpirit of *Daniel*, to confider, and underftand by books, the time that he hath appointed for the deliverance of his people, that fixing their fupplications for the speeding thereof, the commandment may come forth for its full accomplifhment.

[3.] Having attained this, the Lord gives him fresh discoveries, new light of the time for the birth of the *Meffiah*, which he thought not of, prayed not for. *Seventy weeks are determined, &c. ver. 24.* So delighted is the Lord with his people's diligent enquiry into his ways, and walkings towards them, that thereupon he appears unto them in the revelation of his mind, beyond all that they did expect or defire.

Now all this have I fpoken to ftir you up unto that, whereunto at the entrance of this Ufe you were exhorted: that you would labour for that fpiritual wifdom and prudence, which may acquaint your hearts, at leaft in fome meafure, with the mind and will of God, concerning his work in the generation wherein you live. And farther to provoke you hereunto, know that you cannot but wander, as in many other, fo efpecially in four finful things: 1.) Sinful cares, 2.) Sinful fears, 3.) Sinful follies, 4.) Sinful negligence.

1.) Sinful cares. Anxious and dubious thoughts about fuch things, as perhaps the Lord intends utterly to deftroy, or at leaft render ufelefs. Had it not been the greateft folly in the world for *Noah* and his fons, when the flood was approaching to fweep away the creatures from the face of the earth, to have been folicitous about flocks and herds, that were fpeedily to be deftroyed? Many mens thoughts at this day do even devour them about fuch things, as, if they knew the feafon, would be contemptible unto them. Would'ft thou labour for honour, if thou kneweft that God at this time were labouring to lay all the *honour of the earth in the duft*? Could'ft thou fet thy heart upon the encrease of riches, wert thou acquainted that God intends instantly to make *silver as ftones, and cedars as fycamores*^a, though not for plenty, yet for value? Would men be fo exceedingly folicitous about this or that form of religion, this or that power to fupprefs fuch or fuch a perfuafion; if they knew that the Lord would fuddenly *fill the earth with his knowledge as the waters cover the fea*ⁱ? Should our fpirits fink for fear of this or that perfecutor or oppreffor, were it difcovered unto us that in a fhort time *nothing fhall hurt or deftroy in the whole mountain of the Lord*^k? Should we tremble at the force and power of this or that growing monarchy, giving its power to the beaft, had God revealed unto us, that he is going to shake it until it be tranflated? Certain it is, that the root of all the finful cares, which fometimes are ready to devour the hearts of God's people, is this unacquaintednefs with the work and mind of the Lord.

2.) Sinful fears. *Luke xxi. 28.* our Saviour having told his difciples of wars, tumults, feditions, famines, earthquakes, &c. which were to come upon the earth, bids them, when they fee thefe things, to *lift up their heads for joy*. But how fhould this be? rejoice in the midft of fo many evils and troubles, in the moft whereof

ⁱ Gen. vi. 13.

^a Ifa. xxiii. 9.

^k 1 Kings x. 27.

ⁱ Hab. ii. 14.

^a Ifa. lxxv. 25.

they were to have a *Benjamin's mess*, a double portion? Yea, saith our Saviour, *rejoice*, for I have told you before, that then it is that your deliverance and redemption draweth nigh. It is for them to shake and tremble who are in the dark, who know not what the Lord is doing. They may be at their wits end, who know no other end of these things; but for you, who know the mind of the Lord, what he intendeth, and will effect by these things, cast off all sinful fears, and rejoice in him who cometh.

Amongst us in these days new troubles arise, wars, and rumors of wars, appearances of famine, invasions, conspiracies, revolts, treacheries, sword, blood. Oh, how do mens faces wax pale, and their hearts die within them! Sometimes with *David* they could fly to the *Philistines*, and wind up their interest with them, whom God will destroy. Every new appearance of danger shuffles them off from all their comforts, all their confidence. Hence poor souls are put upon doubling and shifting in the ways of God, in such a frame as God exceedingly abhors. They know not why any mercy is given, nor to what end, and therefore are afraid to own it, lest some sudden alteration should follow, and make it too hot for them to hold it; and all this because they know not the mind of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God; were they but acquainted with it, so far as it is evidently revealed, they would quickly see all things working together to the appointed end.

3.) Sinful follies. Toil and labour in vain is of all follies the greatest folly: like the *Jews* under *Julian*, building of their temple in the day, God casting it to the ground in the night. When a man labours, toils, wearies, and spends himself, for the accomplishing of that, which shall never come to pass, and that, which if he would but enquire, he might know shall never come to pass, he cannot well want the livery of a brutish man. How many poor creatures, that think themselves wiser than those of *Teman*, and *Dedan*, and all the children of the *East*, do spend and consume their days and time in such ways as this, labouring night and day to set up, what God will pull down, and what he hath said shall fall. *Come on, let us deal wisely*, saith *Pharaoh* to his *Egyptians*, *Exod. i. 10.* to root out and destroy these *Israelites*. Poor fool! is there any wisdom or counsel against the Most High? I could give instances plenty in these days, of men labouring in the dark, not knowing what they are doing, endeavouring with all their strength to accomplish that, whereof the Lord hath said, *It shall not prosper*: and all because they discern not the season.

4.) Sinful negligence. You are no way able to do the work of God in your generation. It is the commendation of many saints of God, that they were *upright, and served the will of God in their generation*. Besides the general duties of the covenant, incumbent on all the saints at all seasons, there are special works of providence, which in sundry generations the Lord effecteth, concerning which he expects his people should know his mind, and serve him in them. Now can a servant do his master's work, if he know not his will? The Lord requireth that in the great things which he hath to accomplish in this generation, all his should close with him. What is the reason that some stand in the market-place idle all the day? some work for a season, and then give over, they know not how to go a step farther, but after a day, a week, a month, or year, are at a stand? worse than all this, some counterwork the Lord with all their strength? the most neglect the duty which of them is required? What is the reason of all this? They know in no measure what the Lord is doing, and what he would have them apply themselves unto. The best almost live from hand to mouth, following present appearances, to the great neglect of the work, which the Lord would have hastned amongst us. All this comes from the same root.

But now, if all these sad and sinful consequences attend this nescience of the mind of God, as to the things which he is doing, in the days wherein we live, so far as he hath revealed himself, and requires us to observe his walkings; by what ways and means may we come to the knowledge thereof, that we be not sinfully bewildred in our own cares, fears, and follies, but that we may follow hard after God, and be upright in our generation?

There be four things; whereby we may come to have an insight into the work which the Lord will do, and accomplish in our days.

- (1. The light which he gives.
- (2. The previous works which he doth.
- (3. The expectation of his saints.
- (4. The fear of his adversaries.

(1. The light which he gives. God doth not use to set his people to work in the dark. They are the *children of light*, and they are no *deeds of darkness* which they have to do. However others are blinded, they shall see. Yea he always suits their light to their labour, and gives them a clear discerning of what he is about. The Lord God doth nothing, but he reveals his secrets to his servants. The light of every age is the forerunner of the work of every age.

When Christ was to come in the flesh, *John Baptist* comes a little before, a new light, a new preacher. And what doth he discover and reveal? Why he calls them off from resting on legal ceremonies to the doctrine of faith, repentance, and Gospel ordinances; tells them the kingdom of God is at hand; instructs them in the knowledge of him who was coming. To what end was all this? Only that the minds of men being enlightened by his preaching, who was a *burning and a shining lamp*, they might see what the Lord was doing.

Every Age hath its peculiar work, hath its peculiar light. Now what is the light which God manifestly gives in, in our days? Surely not new doctrines (as some pretend) indeed old errors, and long since exploded fancies. Plainly the peculiar light of this generation is that discovery, which the Lord hath made to his people of the mystery of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny. The opening, unravelling and revealing the antichristian interest, interwoven and coupled together in civil and spiritual things, into a state opposite to the kingdom of the Lord *Jesus*, is the great discovery of these days. Who almost is there amongst us now, who doth not evidently see, that for many generations the western nations have been juggled into spiritual and civil slavery, by the legerdemain of the whore, and the potentates of the earth made drunk with the cup of her abominations? how the whole earth hath been rolled in confusion, and the saints hurried out of the world, to give way to their combined interest? Hath not God unveiled that harlot, made her naked, and discovered her abominable filthiness? Is it not evident to him that hath but half an eye, that the whole present constitution of the government of the nations, is so cemented with antichristian mortar, from the very top to the bottom, that without a thorough shaking they cannot be cleansed? This then plainly discovers, that the work which the Lord is doing, relates to the unwinding of this close combination against himself, and the kingdom of his dear Son; and he will not leave until he have done it. To what degree in the several nations this shaking shall proceed, I have nothing to determine in particular, the Scripture having not expressed it. This only is certain, it shall not stop, nor receive its period, before the interest of antichristianity be wholly separated from the power of those nations.

(2. The previous works he doth. How many of these doth our Saviour give, as signs of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and so consequently of propagating the Gospel more and more to the nations, *Matth. xxiv. Luke xxi.* How fearful and dreadful they were in their accomplishment, *Josephus* the Jewish historian relateth: and how by them the Christians were fore-warned, and did by them understand what the Lord was doing, *Eusebius* and others declare. *When, saith he, you shall see the abomination of desolation* (the *Roman* eagles and ensigns) *standing in the holy place,* *Matth. xxiv. 15.* or, *Jerusalem compassed with Armies,* as *Luke, xxi. 20.* *then know* by that, that the end thereof is come, and your deliverance at hand.

The works of God are to be sought out of them that have pleasure in them. They are vocal speaking works, the mind of God is in them. They may be heard, read, and understood: *the rod may be heard, and who hath appointed it.* Now generally he begins with lesser works to point out to the sons of men, what he is about to accomplish. By these may his will be known, that he may be met in righteousness.

Now what, I pray, are the works that the Lord is bringing forth upon the earth? what is he doing in our own and the neighbour nations? Shew me the potentate upon the earth, that hath a peaceable molehill, to build himself an habitation upon? Are not all the controversies, or the most of them, that at this day are disputed in letters of blood among the nations, somewhat of a distinct constitution

on from those formerly under debate, those tending meerly to the power and splendour of single persons, these to the interest of the many? Is not the hand of the Lord in all this? Are not the shaking of these heavens of the nations from him? Is not the voice of Christ in the midst of all this tumult? And is not the genuine tendence of these things open and visible unto all? What speedy issue all this will be driven to, I know not: so much is to be done, as requires a long space. Though a Tower may be pulled down faster than it was set up, yet that which hath been building a thousand years is not like to go down in a thousand days.

(3. The expectation of the saints is another thing, from whence a discovery of the will of God and the work of our generation may be concluded. The secret ways of God's communicating his mind unto his saints, by a fresh savour of accomplishing prophecies, and strong workings of the spirit of supplications, I cannot now insist upon. This I know, they shall not be *led into temptation*, but kept from the hour thereof, when it comes upon the whole earth. When God raiseth up the expectation of his people to any thing, he is not unto them as waters that fail. Nay he will assuredly fulfil the desires of the poor.

Just about the time that our Saviour Christ was to be born of a woman, how were all that waited for salvation in *Israel* raised up to an high expectation of the kingdom of God; such as that people never had before, and assuredly shall never have again. Yea famous was the waiting of that season through the whole *Roman* empire. And the Lord whom they sought, came to his Temple. Eminent was their hope, and excellent was the accomplishment.

Whether this will be made a rule to others or no, I know not: this I am assured, that being bottomed on promises, and built up with supplications, it is a ground for them to rest upon. And here I dare appeal to all, who with any diligence have enquired into the things of the kingdom of Christ, that have any savour upon their spirits of the accomplishment of prophecies and promises in the latter days, who count themselves concerned in the glory of the Gospel; whether this thing of consuming the mystery of iniquity, and vindicating the Churches of Christ, into the liberties purchased for them by the Lord *Jesus*, by the shaking and translating all opposing heights and heavens, be not fully in their expectations. Only the time is in the hand of God, and the rule of our actions with him is his revealed will.

(4. Whether the fears of his adversaries have not their lines meeting in the same point, themselves can best determine. The whole world was more or less dreaded at the coming of Christ in the flesh. When also the signs of his vengeance did first appear to the pagan world, in calling to an account for the blood of his saints, the kings and captains present cry out: *The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?* Rev. vi. 17.

I am not of counsel to any of the adherents to the man of sin, or any of those who have given their power unto the beast; I have not a key to the bosoms of the enemies of Christ; I am neither their interpreter, nor do they allow me to speak in their behalf; yet truly upon very many probable grounds I am fully persuaded, that were the thoughts of their hearts disclosed, notwithstanding all their glittering shews, dreadful words, threatening expressions, you shall see them tremble, and dread this very thing, that the whole world as now established will be wraped up in darkness, at least until that cursed interest, which is set up against the Lord *Jesus*, be fully and wholly shaken out from the heavens and earth of the nations.

And thus without leading you about by chronologies and computations, which yet have their use (well to count a number being wisdom indeed) I have a little discovered unto you some rules, whereby you may come to be acquainted with the work of God in the days wherein we live, and also what that work is, which is our first *Use*. The next shall be for direction, to guide you what you ought to do, when you know what is the work of your generation.

Use 2. Be exhorted to prepare to meet the Lord, to make his way straight: and this I would press distinctly.

(1.) As to your persons.

(2.) As to your employments.

(1.) As to your persons. Give the Lord *Jesus* a throne in your hearts, or it will not be at all to your advantage, that he hath a throne and kingdom in the world. Perhaps you will see the plenty of it, but not taste one morsel. Take first that which comes not by observation, that which is within you which is *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost*. Take it in its power, and you will be the better enabled to observe it coming in its glory. *Seek first this kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Oh that it were the will of God to put an end to all that pretended holiness, hypocritical humiliation, selfinterested religion, that have been among us, whereby we have flattered God with our lips, whilst our hearts have been far from him! Oh that it might be the glory of this assembly, above all the assemblies of the world, that every ruler in it might be a sincere subject in the kingdom of the Lord *Jesus*! Oh! that it might suffice that we have had in our parliament, and among our ministers, so much of the form, and so little of the power of godliness: that we have called the world Christ, and lusts Christ, and self Christ, working indeed for them, when we pretended all for Christ. Oh that I could nourish this one contention in your honourable assembly, that you might strive who should excel in setting up the Lord *Jesus* in your hearts.

You may be apt to think, that if you can carry on, and compass your purposes, then all your enemies will be assuredly disappointed. Do but embrace the Lord *Jesus* in his kingly power in your bosoms, and *ipso facto* all your enemies are everlastingly disappointed; you are the grains, which in the sifting of the nation have been kept from falling to the ground. Are you not the residue of all the chariots of *England*? Oh that in you might appear the reality of the kingdom of the Lord *Jesus*, which hath been so long pretended by others! that sound righteousness, not a pharisaical, rigid, supercilious affectation, nor a careless belief and comportment, the issue of novel fancies, might be found upon your spirits; that you may be thought meet to rejoice with the Lord in his kingdom! otherwise this day of the Lord which we have described, however desired and longed after, will be *darkness to you, and not light*.

(2.) In reference to your great employments, whereunto the Lord hath called you. And here I shall briefly hold out unto you one or two things.

[1.] That you would seriously consider, why it is that the Lord shakes the heavens and the earth of the nations, to what end this tendereth, and what is the cause thereof. Is it not from hence, that he may revenge their opposition to the kingdom of his dear Son? that he may shake out of the midst of them all that antichristian mortar, wherewith from their first chaos they have been cemented; that so the kingdoms of the earth may become the kingdoms of the Lord *Jesus*? Is not the controversy of *Sion* pleaded with them? are not they called to an account for the transgression of that charge given to all potentates: *Touch not mine anointed*? And what is the aim of the Lord *Jesus* herein, whose mighty voice shakes them? Is it not to frame and form them for the interest of his own kingdom? that he may fulfil the word he hath spoken to *Sion*: *I will make thine officers peace and thine exactors righteousness*?

Consider then (I pray) what you have in hand. Wait upon your King the Lord Christ, to know his mind. If you lay any stone in the whole building, that advanceth it self against his scepter, he will shake all again. Dig you never so deep, build you never so high, it shall be shaken. Nay, that there be no opposition will not suffice: he hath given light enough to have all things framed for his own advantage. The time is come, yea the full time is come, that it should be so, and he expects it from you. Say not in the first place, this, or that, suits the interest of *England*, but look what suits the interest of Christ; and assure your selves, that that the true interest of any nation is wrapped up therein. More of this in the treatise annexed to my Sermon of *Jan.* 31.

[2.] Be encouraged under all those perplexities and troubles, which you are, or may be wrapped in. Lift up the hands that hang down, and let the feeble knees be strengthened: *It is but yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* The more you are for Christ, the more enemies you shall be sure to have; but the Lamb shall overcome. He is come to revenge the blood of his slain upon this generation, and to free the residue from the jaws of the

terrible. He is our rock, and his work is perfect : what he hath begun, faster or slower, he will surely accomplish. It is a thing of the most imaginable indifferency, whether any of our particular persons behold these things here below or not. If otherwise, we shall for the present have *rest with him, and stand in our lot at the end of the days* : but for the work it self, *the decree is gone forth*, and it shall not be recalled : receive strength and refreshment in the Lord.

Use. 3. Wonder not when the heaven is shaken, if you see the stars fall to the ground ; we had some, who pretended to be Church stars, that were merely fixed to all mens view, and by their own confession in the political heavens. The first shaking of this nation shook them utterly to the ground. If others also tremble like an aspen leaf, and know not which wind to yield unto, or sail backwards and forwards by the same gale, wonder not at that neither ; when men lay any other foundation than the immoveable corner stone, at one time or other, sooner or later, assuredly they will be shaken.

Use. 4. Let the professing people that is amongst us look well to themselves : *The day is coming that will burn like an oven.* Dross will not endure this day ; we have many an hypocrite as yet to be uncased. Take heed you that act high, if a false heart, a defiled heart be amongst you, there shall be no place for it in the mountain of the Lord's house. *The inhabitants of Sion shall be all righteous*, Isa. lx. 21. Many that make a great shew now upon the stage, shall be turned off with shame enough ; try and search your hearts, force not the Lord to lay you open to all. The spirit of judgment and burning will try you. Tremble, I pray, for you are entering the most purging, trying furnace, that ever the Lord set up on the earth.

Use. 5. Be loose from all shaken things : you see the clouds return after the rain, one storm in the neck of another. Thus it must be, until Christ hath finished his whole work. *Seeing that all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all manner of holy conversation.* Let your eyes be upwards, and your hearts be upwards, and your hands be upwards, that you be not moved at the passing away of shaken things. I could here encourage you by the glorious issue of all these shakings, whose fore taste might be as marrow to your bones, though they should be appointed to consumption before the accomplishment of it : but I must close

Use. 6. See the vanity, folly, madness of such as labour to oppose the bringing in the kingdom of the Lord *Jesus*. Canst thou hinder the rain from descending upon the earth, when it is falling ? Canst thou stop the sun from rising at its appointed hour ? Will the conception for thee dwell quietly in the womb beyond its month ? Surely thou mayest with far more ease turn and stop the current and course of nature, than obstruct the bringing in of the kingdom of Christ in righteousness and peace. Whence comes it to pass, that so many nations are wasted, destroyed, spoiled, in the days wherein we live ? that God hath taken quietness and peace from the earth ? Doubtless from hence, that they will smite themselves against the *stone cut out of the mountain without hands*. Shall not *the decree bring forth* ? Is it not in vain to fight against the Lord ? Some are angry, some troubled, some in the dark, some full of revenge ; but the truth is, whether they will hear, or forbear, *Babylon shall fall*, and all the glory of the earth be stained, and the kingdoms become the kingdoms of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

SERMON

* S E R M O N XXXIII.

The Stedfastness of Promises, and the Sinfulness of Staggering.

To the COMMONS of *England* in Parliament assembled.

SIRS,



HAT God in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways, having caused various seasons to pass over you, and in them all manifested, that his works are truth, and his ways judgment, calls earnestly by them for that walking before him, which is required from them, who with other distinguishing mercies, are interested in the specialty of his protecting providence. As in a view of present enjoyments, to sacrifice to your net, and burn incense to your drag, as though by them, your portion were fat and plenteous, is an exceeding provocation to the eyes of his glory; so to press to the residue of your desires and expectations, by an arm of flesh, the designings and contrivances of carnal reason, with outwardly appearing mediums of their accomplishment, is no less an abomination to him. Though there may be a present sweetness to them that find the life of the hand, yet their latter end will be, to lie down in sorrow. That you might be prevailed on to give glory to God by stedfastness in believing, committing all your ways to him with patience in well-doing, to the contempt of the most varnished appearance of carnal policy, was my peculiar aim in this ensuing Sermon. That which added ready willingness to my obedience unto your commands for the preaching and publishing hereof, being a serious proposal for the advancement and propagation of the Gospel in another nation, is here again recommended to your thoughts, by

March 8, 1649.

Your most humble Servant,

in our common Master,

J. OWEN.

* This Sermon was preached before the Parliament, Feb. 28, 1649. being a day set apart for solemn humiliation throughout the nation.

Rom. iv. 20.

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief.

IN the first *Chapters* of this *Epistle*, the Apostle from Scripture, and the constant practice of all sorts of men, of all ages, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, wise and barbarians, proves all the world, and every individual therein, to have sinned and come short of the glory of God: And not only so, but that it was utterly impossible, that by their own strength, or by virtue of any assistance communicated, or privileges enjoyed, they should ever attain to a righteousness of their own, that might be acceptable unto God.

Hereupon he concludes that discourse with these two positive assertions: *First*, That for what is past, *every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God*, chap. iii. 19. *Secondly*, For the future, though they should labour to amend their ways, and improve their assistances and privileges to a better advantage than formerly, *yet by the deeds of the law, shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God*, ver. 20.

Now it being the main drift of the Apostle, in this *Epistle*, and in his whole employment, to manifest that God hath not shut up all the sons of men, hopeless and remediless under this condition; he immediately discovers and opens the rich supply, which God in free grace hath made and provided, for the delivery of his own from this calamitous estate, even by the righteousness of faith in Christ, which he unfoldeth, asserteth, proves, and vindicates from objections to the *end of the iii^d Chapter*.

This being a matter of so great weight, as, comprizing in itself the sum of the Gospel wherewith he was entrusted; the honour and exaltation of Christ, which above all he desired; the great design of God to be glorious in his saints; and in a word, the chief subject of the *ambassage* from Christ, to him committed, (to wit, That they who neither have, nor by any means can attain a righteousness of their own, by the utmost of their workings, may yet have that which is compleat and unrefusable in Christ, by believing) he therefore strongly confirms it in the fourth *Chapter*, by testimony and example of the Scripture, with the saints that were of old: thereby also declaring, That though the manifestation of this mystery, were now more fully opened by Christ from the bosom of the Father, yet indeed this was the only way for any to appear in the presence of God, ever since sin entred into the world.

To make his demonstrations the more evident, he singeth out *one* for an example, who was eminently known, and confessed by all to have been the friend of God, to have been righteous and justified before him, and thereon to have held sweet communion with him all his days; to wit, *Abraham*, the father according to the flesh, of all those, who put in the strongest of all men for a share in righteousness, by the privileges they did enjoy, and the works they did perform.

Now concerning him, the Apostle proves abundantly in the beginning of the fourth *Chapter*, That the justification which he found, and the righteousness he attained, was purely that, and no other, which he before described; to wit, a righteousness in the forgiveness of sins, through faith in the blood of Christ. Yea, and that all the privileges and exaltations of this *Abraham*, which made him so signal and eminent among the saints of God, as to be called the *Father of the faithful*, were merely from hence, That this righteousness of grace was freely discovered, and fully established unto him: an enjoyment being granted him in a peculiar manner, by faith, of that promise, wherein the Lord Christ with the whole spring of the righteousness mentioned, was enwrapped. This the Apostle pursues with sundry and various inferences and conclusions, to the *end of ver. 17. chap. iv.*

Having laid down this, in the next place he gives us a description of that faith of *Abraham*, whereby he became inheritor of those excellent things, from the *adjuncts* of it. That as his *justification* was proposed as an example of God's dealing with

with us by his grace, so his faith might be laid down as a pattern for us, in the receiving that grace.

Now this he doth, from

First, The foundation of it, whereon it rested.

Secondly, The matter of it, what he believed.

Thirdly, The manner of it, or how he believed.

First, From the bottom and foundation on which it rested, *viz.* The omnipotency or allsufficiency of God, whereby he was able to fulfil whatever he had engaged himself unto by promise, and which he called him to believe, *ver. 14. He believed him who quickneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were.*

Two great testimonies are here of the power of God:

1. That *he quickneth the dead*: able he is to raise up those that are dead to life again.

2. *He calleth things that are not, as though they were*: by his very call or word, gives being to those things which before were not: as when he said, *Let there be light, there was light*, Gen. i. 3. by that very word, *commanding light to shine out of darkness*, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

These demonstrations of God's allsufficiency he considereth in peculiar reference to what he was to believe; to wit, That *he might be the father of many nations*, *ver. 11.* of the *Jews* according to the flesh, of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, according to the faith whereof we speak. For the first, his *body being now dead*, and *Sarah's womb dead*, *ver. 19.* he rests on God as *quickning the dead*, in believing that he *shall be the father of many nations*. For the other, that he should be a father of the *Gentiles* by faith, the Holy Ghost witnesseth that they *were not a people*, *Hos. ii. 23.* the implanting of them in his stock, must be by a power, *that calleth things that are not, as though they were*: giving a new nature and being unto them, which before they had not.

To bottom ourselves upon the allsufficiency of God, for the accomplishment of such things, as are altogether impossible to any thing, but that allsufficiency, is faith indeed, and worthy our imitation. It is also the wisdom of faith, to pitch peculiarly on that in God, which is accommodated to the difficulties wherewith it is to wrestle. Is *Abraham* to believe, that from *his dead body* must spring a whole nation? He rests on God, as *he that quickneth the dead*.

Secondly, His faith is commended from the matter of it, or what he did believe: which is said in general to be *the promise of God*, *ver. 20. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief.* And particularly the matter of that promise is pointed at, *ver. 11, 18.* that he should be *the father of many nations*; that was his being a *father of many nations*, of having *all nations blessed in his seed*. A matter entangled with a world of difficulties, considering the natural inability of his body, and the body of *Sarah*, to be parents of children. But, when God calls for believing, his truth and allsufficiency being engaged, no difficulty, nor seeming impossibilities, that the thing to be believed is, or may be attended withal, ought to be of any weight with us: he who hath promised, is able.

Thirdly, From the manner of his believing, which is expressed four ways.

1. Against hope, *he believed in hope*, *ver. 18.* Here is a twofold hope mention'd; one that was against him, the other that was for him.

(1.) He believed against hope, that is, when all arguments that might beget hope in him, were against him. Against hope is against all motives unto hope whatever. All reasons of natural hope were against him. What hope could arise in, or by reason, that two dead bodies should be the source and fountain of many nations? so that against all inducements of a natural hope he believed.

(2.) He *believed in hope*; that is, such hope as arose as his faith did, from the consideration of God's allsufficiency. This is an adjunct of his faith, it was such a faith as had hope adjoined with it. And this believing in hope when all reasons of hope were away, is the first thing that is set down, of the manner of his faith. In a decay of all natural helps, the deadness of all means, an appearance of an utter impossibility, that ever the promise should be accomplished, then to believe with unfeigned hope, is a commendable faith.

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2. He was not weak in faith, ver. 19. *μὴ ἀδυνάσας, minime debilis*, Beza. He was by no means weak: a negation, that by a figure, *μειωσις*, doth strongly assert the contrary, to that which is denied. He was no way weak; that is, he was very strong in faith, as is afterwards expressed, ver. 20. *He was strong in faith, giving glory to God*. And the Apostle tells you, wherein this his not weakness did appear: faith he, *He considered not his own body being now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb*, ver. 19. It was seen in this, that his faith carried him above the consideration of all impediments, that might lie in the way to the accomplishment of the promise.

It is mere weakness of faith, that makes a man lie poring on the difficulties and seeming impossibilities that lie upon the promise. We think it our wisdom, and our strength, to consider, weigh, and look into the bottom of oppositions, and temptations, that arise against the promise. Perhaps it may be the strength of our fleshly, carnal reason; but certainly it is the weakness of our faith. He that is strong in faith will not so much as debate, or consider the things, that cast the greatest seeming improbability, yea impossibility, on the fulfilling of the promise: it will not afford a debate or dispute of the cause, nor any consideration. *Being not weak in faith, he considered not*.

3. He was fully persuaded, ver. 21. *πληροφρονησας, persuasionis plenus*. This is the third thing that is observed in the manner of his believing. He fully, quietly, resolvedly cast himself on this, *That he who had promised was able to perform it*. As a ship at sea, (for so the word imports) looking about, and seeing storms and winds arising, sets up all her sails, and with all speed makes to the harbour. *Abraham* seeing the storms of doubts and temptations likely to rise against the promise made unto him, with full sail breaks through all, to lie down quietly in God's allsufficiency.

4. The last is, *That he staggered not*, ver. 20. This is that which I have chosen to insist on unto you, as a choice part of the commendation of *Abraham's* faith, which is proposed for our imitation: *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief*.

The words may be briefly resolved into this doctrinal proposition:

Observation. *All staggering at the promises of God is from unbelief*.

What is of any difficulty in the text, will be cleared in opening the parts of the Observation.

Men are apt to pretend sundry other reasons and causes of their staggering. The promises do not belong unto them, God intends not their souls in them, they are not such, and such, and this makes them stagger: when the truth is, it is their unbelief, and that alone, that puts them into this staggering condition. As in other things, so in this, we are apt to have many fair pretences for foul faults. To lay the burden on the right shoulders, I shall demonstrate, by God's assistance, that it is not this, or that, but unbelief alone, that makes us stagger at the promises.

To make this the more plain, I must open these two things:

I. What is the promise here intended.

II. What it is to stagger at the promise.

I. The promise here mentioned is principally that which *Abraham* believing, it was said eminently, that it was accounted to him for righteousness. So the Apostle tells us, ver. 5. of this Chapter: when this was, you may see Gen. xv. 6. there it is affirmed, *That he believed the Lord, and it was accounted to him for righteousness*. That which God had there spoken to him of, was about the multiplying of his seed as the stars of heaven, whereas he was yet childless.

The last verse of Chapter xiv, leaves *Abraham* full of earthly glory. He had newly conquered five Kings with all their host, was honoured by the King of *Sodom*, and blessed by the King of *Salem*; and yet in the first verse of chap. xv. God appearing to him in a vision, in the very entrance bids him fear not: plainly intimating, that notwithstanding all his outward success and glory, he had still many perplexities upon his spirit, and had need of great consolation and establishment. *Abraham* was not clear in the accomplishment of former promises about the blessed seed, and so though

though he have all outward advancements, yet he cannot rest in them. Until a child of God be clear in the main, in the matter of the great promise, the business of Christ, the greatest outward successes and advantages, will be so far from quieting and settling his mind, that they rather encrease his perplexities. They do but occasion him to cry: Here is this, and that; here is victory, and success; there is wealth, and peace; but here is not Christ.

That this was *Abraham's* condition, appears from *ver. 2.* of that *Chapter*, where God having told him, that *he was his shield, and his exceeding great reward*: he replies: *Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?* As if he should have said, Lord God, thou told'st me when I was in *Haran*, now nineteen years ago, That in me and my seed, all the families of the earth should be blessed, *Gen. xii. 3.* that the blessed, blessing seed, should be of me: but now I wax old, all appearances grow up against the direct accomplishment of that word, and it was that, which above all in following thee, I aimed at: if I am disappointed therein, what shall I do? and what will all these things avail me? what will it benefit me, to have a multitude of earthly enjoyments, and leave them in the close to my servant?

I cannot but observe, that this sighing, mournful complaint of *Abraham*, hath much infirmity, and something of diffidence, mixed with it. He shakes in the very bottom of his soul, that improbabilities were growing up, as he thought, to impossibilities, against him, in the way of the promise. Yet hence also mark these two things: *First*, That he doth not repine in himself, and keep up his burning thoughts in his breast, but sweetly breaths out the burden of his soul, into the bosom of his God. *Lord God*, saith he, *what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?* It is of sincere faith, to unlade our unbelief, in the bosom of our God. *Secondly*, That God takes not his servant at the advantage of his complaining and diffidence: but lets that pass, until having renewed the promise to him, and settled his faith, then he gives in his testimony, that he believed God. The Lord overlooks the weakness, and causeless wailings of his, takes them at the best, and then gives his witness to them.

This, I say, was the promise whereof we spake: That he should have a seed of his own, like the stars that cannot be numbred, *Gen. xv. 4, 5.* And herein are contained three things.

1. The purely spiritual part of it, that concerned his own soul in Christ. God engaging about his seed minds him of his own interest in that seed which brings the blessing. *Jesus Christ*, with his whole mediation, and his whole work of redemption, is in this promise, with the enjoyment of God in covenant, *as a shield, and as an exceeding great reward.*

2. The kingdom of Christ, in respect of the propagation and establishment of it, with the multitude of his subjects, that also is in this promise.

3. The temporal part of it, multitudes of children to a childless man, and an heir from his own bowels.

Now this promise, in these three branches, takes up your whole interest, comprehends all you are to believe for: be you considered, either as believers, or as rulers. As believers: so your interest lies in these two things: That your own souls have a share and portion in the Lord Christ: and that the kingdom of the Lord *Jesus* be exalted and established. As rulers: That peace and prosperity may be the inheritance of the nation, is in your desires. Look upon this in subordination to the kingdom of Christ, and so all these are in this promise.

To make this more plain, these being the three main things that you aim at: I shall lay before you three promises, suited to these several things, which, or the like, you are to view in all your actings, *all staggering at them, being from unbelief.*

The first thing you are to believe for, is the interest of your own souls in the covenant of grace, by Christ. As to this I shall only point unto that promise of the covenant, *Heb. viii. 12.* *I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins, and their iniquities I will remember no more.*

The second is the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, in despite of all opposition. And for this amongst innumerable, take that of *Isa. lx. 11.* *Therefore thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their Kings may be brought: for the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish.*

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The quiet and peace of the nation, which ye regard as rulers, as it stands in subordination to the kingdom of Christ; comes also under the promise, for which take that of *Jeremiah xxx. 20, 21.*

These being your three main aims, let your eye be fixed on these three, or the like promises; for in the demonstration and the use of the point, I shall carry along all three together, desiring that what is instanced in any one, may be always extended to both the other.

II. What is it to stagger at the promise. *He staggered not, & διαχειδν, he disputed not*: διαχειν is properly to make use of our own judgment and reason, in discerning of things, of what sort they be. It is sometimes rendered, *to doubt*, *Matth. xxi. 21.* *If you have faith, & μὴ διαχειδντε, and doubt not*: that is, not use arguings and reasonings in your selves concerning the promise and things promised. Sometimes it simply denotes to discern a thing as it is: so the word is used *1. Cor. xi. 29.* διαχειν τὸ σῶμα, *discerning the body.* In the sense wherein it is here used, as also *Matth. xxi. 21.* it holds out, as I said, a self consultation and dispute, concerning those contrary things that are proposed to us. So also *Acts x. 20.* Peter is commanded to obey the vision, μὴδὲν διαχειν, *nothing doubting.* What is that? Why, a not continuing to do, what he is said to have done, ver. 17. *He doubted in himself, what the vision he had seen should mean*: he rolled, and disputed it in his own thoughts, *he staggered at it.*

To stagger then at the promise, is to take into consideration the promise it self, and withal, all the difficulties that lie in the way for the accomplishment of it, as to a man's own particular, and there so to dispute it in his thoughts, as not fully to cast it off, nor fully to close with it. For instance, the soul considers the promise of free grace in the blood of *Jesus*, looks upon it, weighs, as well as it is able, the truth of God, who make the promise, with those other considerations, which might lead the heart to rest firmly upon it; but withal, takes into his thoughts his own unworthiness, sinfulness, unbelief, hypocrisy, and the like; which as he supposes, powerfully stave off the efficacy of the promise from him. Hence he knows not what to conclude: if he add a grain of faith, the scale turns on the side of the promise; the like quantity of unbelief makes it turn upon him; and what to do he knows not: let go the promise he cannot, take fast hold he dares not; but here he staggers, and wavers to and fro.

Thus the soul comes to be like *Paul*, in another case, *Phil. i. 23.* He considered his own advantage on the one side by his *dissolution*, and the profit of the Churches by his *abiding in the flesh*, on the other; and taking in these various thoughts, he cries out, he is *in a straight*, he staggered, he was betwixt two, and knew not which to chuse: or as *David*, *2 Sam. xxiv. 14.* when he had a tender of several corrections made to him, says, *I am in a great straight*; he sees evil in every one, and knows not which to chuse.

A poor creature looking upon the promise sees, as he supposes, in a steadfast closing with the promise, that there lies presumption; on the other hand, certain destruction, if he believes not; and now he staggers, he is in a great straight: arguments arise on both sides, he knows not how to determine them, and so hanging in suspense, he staggereth. Like a man travelling a Journey, and meeting with two several paths, that promise both fairly, and he knows not which is his proper way; he guesses, and guesses, and at length cries: Well, I know not which of these ways I should go; but this is certain, if I mistake, I am undone; I'll go in neither, but here I'll sit down, and not move one step in either of them, until some one come, that can give me direction. The soul very frequently sits down in this hesitation, and refuses to step one step forwards, till God come mightily and lead out the spirit to the promise, or the devil turn it aside to unbelief.

It is, as a thing of small weight in the air: the weight that it hath, carries it downwards; and the air, with some breath of wind, bears it up again, so that it waves to and fro: sometimes it seems as though it would fall, by its own weight; and sometimes again, as though it would mount quite out of sight; but poised between both it tosseth up and down, without any great gaining either way. The promise draws the soul upward, and the weight of its unbelief sinks it downward: sometimes the promise attracts so powerfully, you would think the heart quite drawn up into it: and sometimes again unbelief presses down, that you

would think it gone for ever; but neither prevails utterly, the poor creature swaggs between both, this is to stagger. Like the two disciples going to *Emaus*, Luke xxiv. 14. *They talked together of the things that had happened*, debated the business, and ver. 22. they gave up the result of their thoughts: *They trusted it had been he, that should have redeemed Israel*: they trusted once, but now seeing him slain and crucified, they know not what to say to it. What then? do they quite give over all trusting in him? No, they cannot do so, ver. 23, 24, 25. *Certain women had astonished them, and affirmed that he was risen*: yea, and *others also going to his grave found it so*: hereupon they *have communication within themselves, and are sad*, ver. 17. that is, they staggered, they were in a staggering condition: much appears for them, something against them, they know not what to do.

A poor soul, that hath been long perplexed in trouble and anxiety of mind, finds a sweet promise, Christ in a promise suited to all his wants, coming with mercy to pardon him, with love to embrace him, with blood to purge him, and is raised up to roll himself in some measure upon this promise: on a sudden terrors arise, temptations grow strong, new corruptions break out, Christ in the promise dies to him, Christ in the promise is slain, is in the grave as to him; so that he can only sigh, and say: I trusted for deliverance by Christ, but now all is gone again, I have little or no hope, Christ in the promise is slain to me. What then? shall he give over, never more enquire after this buried Christ, but sit down in darkness and sorrow? No, he cannot do so: this morning some new arguments of Christ's appearance again upon the soul are made out; it may be, Christ is not for ever lost to him. What does he then? Stedfastly believe he cannot, totally give over he will not: he staggers, he is full of self communications, and is sad. This it is, to *stagger at the promise of God*.

I come now to prove, that notwithstanding any pretences whatever, *all this staggering is from unbelief*.

The two disciples, whom we now mentioned, that staggered and disputed between themselves in their journey to *Emaus*, thought they had a good reason, and a sufficient appearing cause of all their doubtings. *We hoped, (say they,) that it was he, that should have delivered Israel*. What do they now stand at? Alas! the *chief priests and rulers have condemned him to death, and crucified him*, Luke xxiv. 20. And is it possible that deliverance should arise from a crucified man? this makes them stagger. But when our Saviour himself draws nigh to them, and gives them the ground of all this, he tells them it is all from hence: *They are foolish and slow of heart to believe*, ver. 25. Here is the rise of all their doubtings, even their unbelief. Whilst you are slow of heart to believe, do not once think of establishment.

Peter venturing upon the waves at the command of Christ, *Matth. xiv. seeing the wind to grow boisterous*, ver. 29. He also hath a storm within, and crys out: Oh, save me! what was now the cause of *Peter's* fear, and crying out? Why the wind and sea grew boisterous, and he was ready to sink: no such thing; but merely unbelief, want of faith: ver. xxxi. *O thou of little faith, faith our Saviour, wherefore didst thou doubt?* it was not the great winds, but thy little faith that made thee stagger. And in three or four other places, upon several occasions, doth our Saviour lay all the wavering and staggering of his followers, as to any promised mercy upon this score, as *Matth. vi. 30. and viii. 26*.

Isa. vii. Abaz being afraid of the combination of *Syria* and *Ephraim* against him, received a promise of deliverance by *Isaiah*, ver. 7. Whereupon the prophet tells him and all *Judah*, *That if they will not believe, surely they shall not be established*, ver. 9. He doth not say, if *Damascus* and *Ephraim* be not broken, you shall not be established; no, he doth not stick there: the fear that you will not be established ariseth merely from your unbelief, that keeps you off from closing with the promise, which would certainly bring you establishment.

And this is the sole reason the Apostle gives, why the word of promise being preached becomes unprofitable, even because of unbelief: *It was not mixed with faith*, Heb. iv. 2.

But these things will be more clear under the demonstrations of the point; which are two.

1. When a man doubts, hesitates, and disputes, any thing in himself, his reasonings must have their rise, either from something within himself, or from something in the things concerning which he staggereth: either *Certitudo mentis*, the assurance of his mind; or *Certitudo entis*, the certainty of the thing it self, is wanting. He that doubteth whether his friend in a far country be alive or not, his staggering ariseth from the uncertainty of the thing it self: when that is made out, he is resolved, as it was with *Jacob* in the case of *Joseph*. But he that doubteth, whether the needle in the compass, being touched with the loadstone, will turn northward, all the uncertainty is in his own mind.

When men stagger at the promises, this must arise either from within themselves, or some occasion must be administered hereunto from the promise. If from within themselves, that can be nothing but unbelief; an inbred obstacle to closing with, and resting on the promise, that is unbelief. If then we demonstrate that there is nothing in the promise, either as to the matter, or manner, or any attendency of it, that should occasion any such staggering, we lay the burden and blame on the right shoulders, the sin of staggering on unbelief.

Now that any occasion is not administered, nor cause given, of this staggering from the promise, will appear, if we consider seriously whence any such occasion or cause should arise. All the stability of a promise, depends upon the qualifications of the promiser, to the ends and purposes of the promise. If a man make me a promise to do such and such things for me, and I question, whether ever it will be so, or not; it must be from a doubt of the want of one of these things in him that makes the promise: either (1.) of truth; or (2.) of ability to make good his word, because of the difficulty of the thing it self; or (3.) of sincerity to intend me really, what he speaks of; or (4.) of constant memory to take the opportunity of doing the thing intended; or (5.) of stableness to be still of the same mind. Now if there be no want of any of these in him whose promises we speak of, there is then certainly no ground of our staggering, but only from our own unbelief.

Let us now see whether any of these things be wanting to the promises of God: and begin we with the first.

(1.) Is there truth in these promises? If there be the least occasion in the world, to suspect the truth of the promises, or the veracity of the promiser, then may our staggering at them, arise from thence, and not from our unbelief. On this ground it is, that all humane faith, that is bottomed meerly on the testimony of man, is at best but a probable opinion: for every man is a lyer, and possibly may lye, in that very thing, he is engaged to us in. Though a good man will not do so to save his life; yet it is possible, he may be tempted, he may do so. But now the author of the promises, whereof we speak, is truth it self, *the God of truth*. Who hath taken this as his special attribute, to distinguish him from all others. He is *the very God of truth*; and holds out this very attribute in a special manner, in this very thing, in making of his promise: *He is faithful to forgive us our sins*, 1 Joh. i. 9. Whence his word is said not only to be true, but truth, *Joh. xvii. 19.* truth it self. *All flesh is as grass, but his word abideth for ever*, *Isa. xlv. 1.*

But yet farther, that it may be evident, that from hence there can be no occasion of staggering, this *God of truth*, whose word is truth, hath in his infinite wisdom condescended to our weakness, and used all possible means to cause us to apprehend the truth of his promises. The Lord might have left us in the dark, to have gathered out his mind and will towards us from obscure expressions; and knowing of what value his kindness is, it might justly be expected that we should do so. Men in misery are glad to lay hold of the least word that drops from him, that can relieve them, and to take courage and advantage upon it. As the servants of *Benhadad* watched diligently, what would fall from the mouth of *Ahab* concerning their master, then in fear of death; and when he had occasionally called him his brother, they presently laid hold of it, and cry, *Thy brother Benhadad*; 1 Kings xx. 35. God might have left us, and yet have manifested much free grace, to have gathered up falling crumbs, or occasional droppings of mercy, and supply, that we should have rejoiced to have found out one word looking that way; but to shut up all objections, and to stop for ever the mouth of unbelief, he hath not only spoken plainly, but hath condescended to use all the ways of confirming the truth of what he says and speaks, that ever were in use among the sons of men.

There

There be four ways, whereby men seek to obtain credit to what they speak, as an undoubted truth, that there may be no occasion of staggering.

[1.] By often avering and affirming of the same thing. When a man says the same thing again and again, it is a sign that he speaks the truth, or at least that he would be thought so to do. Yea, if an honest man do clearly, fully, plainly, often engage himself to us in the same thing, we count it a vile jealousy not to believe the real truth of his intentions. Now the Lord in his promises often speaks the same things, he speaks once and twice. There is not any thing that he hath promised us, but he hath done it again and again. For instance, as if he should say: *I will be merciful to your sins*, I pray believe me, for, *I will pardon your iniquities*, yea, it shall be so, *I will blot out your transgressions as a cloud*.

There is not any want, whereunto we are liable, but thus he hath dealt concerning it. As his command is line upon line, so is his promise. And this is one way whereby God causeth the truth of his promises to appear. To take away all colour of staggering, he speaks once, yea twice, if we will hear.

[2.] The second way of confirming any truth, is by an oath. Though we fear the truth of some men in their assertions, yet when once they come to swear any thing in justice and judgment, there are very few so knowingly profligate, and past all sense of God, but that their asseverations do gain credit, and pass for truth. Hence the Apostle tells us, *Heb. vi. 16.* that *an oath for confirmation is to men an end of all strife*. Though the truth be before ambiguous and doubtful, yet when any interposes with an oath, there is no more contest amongst men. That nothing may be wanting to win our belief to the promises of God, he hath taken this course also, he hath sworn to their truth, *Heb. vi. 13.* *When God made promises to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself*. He confirms his promise by an oath. *O felices nos, quorum causa Deus jurat; o infelices, si nec juranti Deo credimus!* When Christ came, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen, to make sure work of the truth of them, he is confirmed in his administrations, by an oath: *Heb. vii. 21.* *He was made a priest by an oath, by him that said, The Lord swear, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever*. Now, I pray, what is the cause of this great condescension in the God of heaven, to confirm that word, which in itself is truth, by an oath? The Apostle satisfies us as to the end aimed at, *Heb. vi. 17, 18.* This was, saith he, the aim of God herein, that his people seeing him engaged, *by two such immutable things, as his promise and his oath*, may be assured that there is an utter impossibility, that any one word of his should come short of its truth; or, that they firmly resting upon it should be deceived thereby. And this is a second way.

[3.] Another course, whereby men confirm the truth of what they speak, is by entering into covenant, to accomplish what they have spoken. A covenant gives strength to the truth of any engagement. When a man hath but told you, he will do such and such things for you, you are full of doubts and fears, that he may break with you; but when he hath indented in a covenant, and you can shew it under his hand and seal, you look upon that, consider that, and are very secure. Even this way also hath the Lord taken to confirm and establish his truths and promises, that all doubtings and staggerings may be excluded, he hath wrapped them all up in a covenant, and brought himself into a federal engagement, that upon every occasion, and at every temptation, we may draw out his hand and seal, and say to Satan and our own false hearts: See here, behold God engaged in covenant, to make good the word, wherein he hath caused me to put my trust: and this is his property, that he is a God keeping covenant. So that having his promise redoubled, and that confirmed by an oath, all sealed and made sure by an unchangeable covenant, what can we require more, to assure us of the truth of these things? But yet farther:

[4.] In things of very great weight and concernment, such as whereon lives, and the peace of nations does depend, men use to give hostages, for the securing each other of the faith and truth of all their engagements, that they may be mutual pledges of their truth and fidelity. Neither hath the Lord left this way unused to confirm his promise. He hath given us an hostage to secure us of his truth, one exceedingly dear to him, one always in his bosom, of whose honour he is as careful, as of his own. Jesus Christ is the great hostage of his Father's truth, the pledge of his fidelity in his promises. God hath set him forth, and given him to us for this end.

Behold the Lord himself shall give you a sign (a sign that he will fulfil his word) a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, Isa. vii. 14. That you may be assured of my truth, the virgin's Son shall be a hostage of it. In him are all the promises of God yea and amen. Thus also to his saints he gives the farther hostage of his spirit, and the first fruits of glory; that the full accomplishment of all his promises, may be contracted in a little, and presented to their view. As the *Israelites* had the pleasures of *Canaan* in the clusters of grapes, brought from thence.

Now from all this it is apparent, not only that there is truth in all the promises of God, but also that truth so confirmed, so made out, established, that not the least occasion imaginable is thence administered to staggering or doubting. He that disputes the promises, and knows not how to close with them, must find out another cause of his so doing: as to the truth of the promise, there is no doubt at all, nor place for any.

(2.) But secondly, though there be truth in the promise, yet there may want ability in the promiser to accomplish the thing promised, because of its manifold difficulties. This may be a second cause of staggering, if the thing itself engaged for be not compassable, by the ability of the engager. As if a skilful physician should promise a sick man a recovery from his disease, though he could rely upon the truth and sincerity of his friend, yet he cannot but question his ability as to this, knowing that to cure the least distemper is not absolutely in his power; but when he promises, who is able to perform, then all doubting in this kind is removed. See then whether it be so, in respect of these promises whereof we speak. When God comes to *Abraham* to engage himself in that covenant of grace, from whence flow all the promises whereof we treat, he lays this down as the bottom of all: *I am, saith he, God Almighty, Gen. xvii. 1. or, God Allsufficient, very well able to go through with whatever I promise.* When difficulties, temptations, and troubles arise, remember who it is that hath promised; not only he that is true and faithful, but he that is God Almighty, before whom nothing can stand, when he will accomplish his word. And that this was a bottom of great confidence to *Abraham*, the Apostle tells you, *Rom. iv. 21. Being fully persuaded that he who had promised, was able also to perform.* When God is engaged by his word, his ability is especially to be eyed. The soul is apt to ask how can this be? it is impossible it should be so to me: but, *he is able that hath promised.* And this, *Rom. xi. 23.* the same Apostle holds out to us, to fix our faith upon, in reference to that great promise of recalling the *Jews*, and reimplanting them into the vine. *God, saith he, is able to graft them in: though now they seem as dead bones, yet the Lord knows they may live; for he is able to breath upon them, and make them terrible as an army with banners.* Yea, so excellent is this allsufficiency, this ability of God to accomplish his whole word, that the Apostle cautions us, that we do not bound it, as though it could go so far only, or so far. Nay, saith he, *Ephes. iii. 20. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.*

When men come to close with the promise indeed, to make a life upon it, they are very ready to question and enquire, whether it be possible that ever the word of it should be made good to them. He that sees a little boat swimming at sea, observes no great difficulty in it, looks upon it without any solicitousness of mind at all, beholds how it tosses up and down, without any fears of its sinking. But now, let this man commit his own life to sea in that bottom, what enquiries will he make? what a search into the vessel? Is it possible, saith he, this little thing should safeguard my life in the ocean? It is so with us, in our view of the promises: whilst we consider them at large, as they lie in the word, alas! they are all true, *all yea and amen*, shall be all accomplished; but when we go to venture our souls upon a promise, in an ocean of wrath and temptations, then every blast we think will overturn it: it will not bear us above all these waves. Is it possible we should swim safely upon the plank of a pinnacle in the midst of the ocean?

Now here we are apt to deceive ourselves, and mistake the whole thing in question, which is the bottom of many corrupted reasonings and perplexed thoughts. We enquire whether it can be so to us, as the word holds out; when the truth is, the question is not about the nature of the thing, but about the power of God. Place the doubt aright, and it is this: Is God able to accomplish what he hath spoken?

Can

Can he heal my backslidings? Can he pardon my sins? Can he save my soul? Now that there may be no occasion, nor colour of staggering upon this point, you see God reveals himself as an allsufficient God, as one that is able to go through with all his engagements. If you will stagger, you may so do; this is certain, you have no cause to do so from hence; there is not any promise that ever God entered into, but he is able to perform it.

But you will say, Though God be thus able, thus allsufficient, yet may there not be defects in the means whereby he worketh? As a man may have a strong arm able to strike his enemies to the ground, but yet if he strike with a feather, or a straw, it will not be done; not for want of strength in his arm, but of fitness and suitableness in the instrument, whereby he acteth. But,

[1.] God using instruments, they do not act according to their own virtue, but according to the influence of virtue by him to them communicated. Look to what end so ever God is pleased to use any means, his chusing of them fills them with efficacy to that purpose. Let the way and means of accomplishing what thou expectest by the promise be in themselves never so weak, yet know, that from God's chusing of them to that end, they shall be filled with virtue and efficacy to the accomplishment of it.

[2.] It is expressly affirmed of the great Mediums of the promise, that they also are able; that there is no want of power in them, for the accomplishment of the thing promised.

1.) There is the means procuring it, and that is Jesus Christ: the promises, as to the good things contained in them, are all purchased by him. And of him, the Apostle affirms expressly: that *he is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him*, Heb. v. 27. No want here, no defect: He is able to do it to the uttermost; able to save them that are tempted, Heb. ii. 18.

2.) There is the great means of manifestation, and that is the word of God. And of this also it is affirmed, that it is able. It hath an allsufficiency in its kind. Paul tells the elders of *Ephesus*: That the *word of grace is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified*, Acts xx. 32.

3.) There is the great means of operation, and that is the spirit of grace. He works the mercy of the promise upon the soul. He also is able, exceeding powerful, to effect the end appointed. He hath no bounds, nor measure of operation, his own will, 1 Cor. xii. 11.

Hence then it is apparent in the second place, that there is no occasion for doubting; yea, that all staggering is excluded, from the consideration of the ability of the promiser, and the means whereby he worketh. If thou continuest to stagger, thou must get a better plea than this, It cannot be, it is impossible: I tell thee nay, but God is able to accomplish the whole word of his promise. But,

(3.) There may be want of sincerity in promises and engagements, which whilst we do but suspect, we cannot chuse but stagger at them. If a man make a promise to me, and I can suppose that he intends not as he says, but hath reserves to himself of another purpose, I must needs doubt, as to the accomplishment of what he hath spoken. If the soul may surmise, that the Lord intends not him sincerely in his promise, but reserves some other thing in his mind, or that it shall be so to others and not to him, he must needs dispute in himself, stagger, and keep off from believing. This then must be demonstrated in the third place: that the promises of God, and God in all his promises, are full of sincerity, so that none need fear to cast himself on them, they shall be real unto him. Now concerning this observe.

[1.] That God's promises are not declarative of his secret purposes and intentions. When God holds out to any a promise of the pardon of sin, this doth not signify to any singular man, that it is the purpose of God, that his sin shall be pardoned. For if so, then either all men must be pardoned, to whom the word of promise comes, which is not; or else God fails of his purposes, and comes short of his intendments; which would render him, either impotent, that he could not; or mutable, that he would not establish them: but *who hath resisted his will?* Rom. ix. *He is the Lord, and he changeth not*, Mal. i. So that though every one, to whom the promise is held out, hath not the fruit of the promise; yet this derogates not at all, from the sincerity of God in his promises; for he doth not hold them forth to any such end and purpose, as to declare his intentions concerning particular persons.

[2.] There are some absolute promises, comprehensive of the covenant of grace, which, as to all those that belong to that covenant, do hold out thus much of the mind of God, that they shall certainly be accomplished in, and towards them all. The soul may freely be invited to venture on these promises, with assurance of their efficacy towards him.

[3.] This God principally declares in all his promises of his mind and purpose, that every soul, to whom they shall come, may freely rest on, to wit; that faith in the promises, and the accomplishment of the promises, are inseparable. He that believeth, shall enjoy. This is most certain, this God declares of his mind, his heart towards us, that as for all the good things he hath spoken of to us, it shall be to us according to our faith. This I say the promises of God do signify of his purpose, that the believer of them, shall be the enjoyer of them: in them, *the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 17. From the faith of God revealing, to the faith of man receiving. So that upon the making out of any promise, you may safely conclude, that upon believing, the mercy, the Christ, the deliverance of this promise is mine. It is true, if a man stand disputing and staggering, whether he have any share in a promise, and close not with it by faith, he may come short of it; and yet without the least impeachment of the truth of the promise, or sincerity of the promiser; for God hath not signified by them, that men shall enjoy the good things of them, whether they believe, or not. Thus far the promises of grace are general, and carry a truth to all, that there is an inviolable connexion between believing, and the enjoyment of the things in them contained. And in this truth is the sincerity of the promiser, which can never be questioned without sin and folly. And this wholly shuts up the spirit from any occasion of staggering. *O ye of little faith! wherefore do ye doubt?* Ah! lest our share be not in this promise; lest we are not intended in it. Poor creatures! there is but this one way of keeping you off from it, that is, disputing it in your selves by unbelief. Here lies the sincerity of God towards thee, that believing, thou shalt not come short of what thou aimest at. Here then is no room for staggering. If proclamation be made, granting pardon to all such rebels, as shall come in by such a season; do men use to stand questioning whether the state bear them any good will, or not? No, saith the poor creature I will cast my self upon their faith and truth engaged in their proclamation, whatever I have deserved in particular, I know they will be faithful in their promises. The Gospel proclamation is of pardon to all comers in, to all believers: it is not for thee, poor staggerer, to question what is the intendment towards thee in particular, but roll thy self on this, there is an absolute sincerity in the engagement which thou mayest freely rest upon. But,

(4.) Though all be present, truth, power, sincerity; yet if he that makes the promise should forget, this were a ground of staggering. *Pharaoh's* butler, without doubt, made large promises to *Joseph*, and probably spake the truth according to his present intention: afterwards standing in the presence of *Pharaoh*, restored to favour, he had doubtless power enough to have procured the liberty of a poor innocent prisoner; but yet this would not do, it did not profit *Joseph*, because, as the text says, *he did not remember Joseph, but forgot him*, Gen. xl. 23. This forgetting made all other things useless. But neither hath this the least colour in divine promises. It was *Sion's* infirmity to say: *The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me*, Isa. xlix. 14. For saith the Lord, *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, but I will not forget thee: behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, and thy walls are continually before me*, ver. 15, 16.

The causes of forgetfulness are,

[1.] Want of love. The things that men love not, they care not for: the matters of their love are continually in their thoughts. Now says God to *Sion*, *Why sayest thou I have forgotten thee?* Is it for want of love? Alas! the love of a most tender mother to her sucking child comes infinitely short of my love to thee. My love to thee is more fixed than so, and how shouldest thou be out of my mind? How shouldest thou be forgotten? Infinite love will have infinite thoughtfulness and remembrance.

[2.] Multiplicity of business. This with men is a cause of forgetting. I had done, says one, as I promised, but multiplicity of occasions thrust it out of my mind, I pray, excuse me. Alas! though I rule all the world, yet, *thou art graven*

ven upon the palms of my hands, and therefore thy walls are continually before me. See also *Psal.* lxxvii. 9. Neither then is there as to this the least colour given us to stagger at the promise of God.

(5.) But lastly, where all other things concur, yet if the person promising be changeable, if he may alter his resolution, a man may justly doubt and debate in himself, the accomplishment of any promise made to him. It is true, may he say, he now speaks his heart and mind, but who can say he will be of this mind to morrow? May he not be turned, and then what becomes of the golden mountains that I promised my self upon his engagement? Wherefore in the last place, the Lord carefully rejects all sinful surmises concerning the least change or alteration in him, or any of his engagements. *He is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning,* Jam. i. 18. No shadow, no appearance of any such thing. *I am the Lord, saith he, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed,* Mal. iii. 6. The Lord knows, that if any thing in us might prevail with him to alter the word that is gone out of his mouth, we should surely perish. We are poor provoking creatures, therefore he lays our not being consumed only on this, even his own unchangeableness. This we may rest upon, he is of one mind, and who can turn him?

And in these observations have I given you the first demonstration of the point: all staggering is from our own unbelief.

2. The experience which we have of the mighty workings of God, for the accomplishment of all his promises, gives light unto this thing. We have found it true, that where he is once engaged, he will certainly go through unto the appointed issue, though it stand him in the laying out of his power and wisdom to the uttermost. *Hab.* iii. 9. *Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the Tribes, thy word.* If God's oath be passed, and his word engaged, he will surely accomplish it, though it cost him the making of his bow quite naked, the manifestation of his power to the utmost.

It is true, never did any wait upon God for the accomplishment and fulfilling of a promise, but he found many difficulties fall out between the word and the thing. So was it with *Abraham* in the business of a son: and so with *David* in the matter of a kingdom. God will have his promised mercies to fall, as the dews upon the parched, gasping earth; or as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. *Isa.* xxxii. 2. Very welcome unto the traveller, who hath had the sun beat upon his head in his travel all the day. *Zion is a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, as a royal diadem in the hand of her God,* *Isa.* lxii. 3. The precious stones of a diadem must be cut and polished, before they be set in beauty and glory. God will have oftentimes the precious living stone of *Zion* to have many a sharp cutting, before they come to be fully fixed in his diadem; but yet in the close, whatever obstacles stand in the way, the promise hath still wrought out its passage: as a river, all the while it is stopped with a dam, is still working higher and higher, still getting more and more strength, until it bear down all before it, and obtain a free course to its appointed place. Every time opposition lies against the fulfilling of the promise, and so seems to impede it for a season, it gets more and more power, until the appointed hour be come, and then the promise bears down all before it.

Were there any thing imaginable, whereof we had not experience, that it had been conquered to open a door for the fulfilling of every word of God, we might possibly, as to the apprehension of that thing, stagger from some other principle, than that of unbelief.

What is there in heaven or earth, but God and his ministering spirits, that hath not, one time or other, stood up to its utmost opposition, for the frustrating of the word, wherein some or other of the saints of God have put their trust? Devils in their temptations, baits, subtilties, accusations, and oppositions; men in their counsels, reasonings, contrivances, interests, dominions, combinations, armies, multitudes, and the utmost of their endeavours; the whole frame of nature, in its primitive instituted course, fire, water, day, night, age, sickness, death, all in their courses have fought against the accomplishment of the promises. And what have they obtained by all their contendings? All disappointed, frustrated, turned back, changed, and served only to make the mercy of the promise more amiable and glorious.

I would

I would willingly illustrate this demonstration with an instance, that the almighty, all conquering power that is in the promise, settling all staggering upon its own basis of unbelief might be the more evident.

I might here mention *Abraham*, with all the difficulties and appearing impossibilities which the promise unto him did pass through, and cast to the ground the mercy of it at length, arising out of the grave; for he *received his son from the dead in a figure*, Heb. xi. 19. Or I might speak of *Joseph*, *Moses*, or *David*: but I shall rather chuse a president from among the works of God, in the days wherein we live, and that in a business, concerning which we may set up our *Eben-Ezer*, and say, Thus far hath God been a helper.

Look upon the affair of *Ireland*. The engagement of the great God of revenges against murder and treachery, the interest of the Lord Christ and his kingdom against the man of sin, furnished the undertakers with manifold promises to carry them out to a desired, a blessed issue. Take now a brief view, of some mountains of opposition, that lie in the way against any success in that place; and hear the Lord saying to every one of them: *Who art thou, O great mountain? before my people thou shalt be made a plain*, Zech. iv. 7.

Not to mention the strivings and strugglings of two manner of people in the womb of this nation, totally obstructing for a long time the bringing forth of any deliverance for *Ireland*: nor yet that mighty mountain (which some misnamed a level) that thought at once to have locked an everlasting door upon that expedition: I shall propose some few, of many that have attended it.

(1.) The silence that hath been in heaven for half an hour, as to this business; the great cessation of prayers in the heavens, of many Churches, hath been no small mountain in the way of the promise. When God will do good for *Zion*, he requires that his *remembrancers give him no rest, until he do it*, Isa. lxii. 7. And yet sometimes in the close of their supplications gives them an *Answer, by terrible things*, Psal. lxxv. 5. He is sometimes *silent to the prayers of his people*, Psal. xxviii. 1. Is not then a grant rare, when his people are silent as to prayers? Of how many congregations in this nation may the prayers, tears and supplications for carrying on of the work of God in *Ireland* be written with the lines of emptiness? What a silence hath been in the heaven of many Churches, for this last half hour? How many that began with the Lord in that work, did never sacrifice at the altar of *Jehovah Nissi*: nor considered that the Lord hath *sworn to have war with such Amalekites* as are there, *from generation to generation*? Exod. xvii. 15, 16. They have forgotten, that *Ireland* was the first of the nations that laid wait for the blood of God's people desiring to enter into his rest; and therefore *their latter end shall be, to perish for ever*, Numb. xxiv. 20. Many are as angry as *Jonah*, not that *Babylon* is spared, but that it is not spared. Hath not this been held out as a mountain? What will you now do, when such or such, these and those men, of this or that party, look upon you *as the grass upon the house tops, which withereth afore it groweth up; wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves, his bosom*: that will not so much as say, *The blessing of the Lord be upon you, we bless you in the name of the Lord*? But now shall the faithfulness of men make the *faith of God of none effect*? Shall the kingdom of Christ suffer because some of those that are his, what through carnal wisdom, what through spiritual folly, refuse to come forth *to his help against the mighty*? No doubtless! *The Lord sees it, and it displeases him; he sees that there is no man, and wonders that there is no intercessor*: even marvels that there are no more supplications on this behalf. *Therefore his own arm brought salvation to him, and his own righteousness it sustained him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for cloathing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies, to the island he will repay recompence*, Isa. lix. 15, 16, 17, 18. Some mens not praying shall not hinder the promises accomplishing. They may sooner discover an idol in themselves, than disappoint the living God. This was a mountain.

(2) Our own advices and councils have often stood in the way of the promises bringing forth. This is not a time, nor place for narrations; so I shall only say to this in general: that if the choicest and most rational advices of the army had not

been

been overfwayed by the providence of God, in all probability your affairs had been more than ten degrees backward, to the condition wherein they are.

(3.) The vifible oppofition of the combined enemy in that nation feemed, as to our ftrength unconquerable. The wife man tells us: A threefold cord is not eafily broken. *Ireland* had a fivefold cord to make ftrong bands for *Zion*, twifted together. Never I think did fuch different interefts bear with one another, for the compaffing of one common end.

He that met the lyon, the fox, and the afs travelling together, wondred, *quo unâ iter facerent*, whither thefe ill-matched affiliates did bend their courfe: neither did his marveling ceafe, when he heard they were going a pilgrimage, in a bufinefs of devotion.

He that fhould meet proteftants, covenanted proteftants, that had fworn in the prefence of the great God to extirpate popery and prelacy, as the *Scots* in *Ulfter*; others that counted themfelves under no lefs facred bond for the maintenance of prelates, fervice-books, and the like, as the whole party of *Ormond's* adherents; joined with a mighty number, that had for eight years together fealed their vows to the Romifh religion, with our blood and their own; adding to them thofe that were profound to revolt up and down, as futed their own intereft, as fome in *Munfter*; all clofing with that party, which themfelves had laboured to render moft odious and execrable, as moft defiled with innocent blood: he, I fay, that fhould fee all thefe after feven years mutual conflicting, and embruing their hands in each other's blood, to march all one way together, cannot but marvel, *quo unâ iter facerent*, whither they fhould journey fo friendly together. Neither furely, would his admiration be leffened, when he fhould hear, that the firft thing they intended and agreed upon was, to cover the innocent blood of forty one contrary to that promife: *Behold the Lord cometh out of his place, to punifh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth alfo fhall difclofe her blood, and fhall no more cover her flain*, *Iſa. xxvi. 21.* and nextly, to eftablifh catholick religion, or the kingdom of *Babel*, in the whole nation, in oppofition to the ingaged truth, and in our days vifibly manifefted power of the Lord *Jeſus*; with fundry fuch like things, contrary to their fciſce and confcience, their covenant and light, yea the truth and honeſty of moſt of the chief Leaders of them. Now how can the promife ſtand in the way of this *Hydra*? What ſays it to this combined oppoſition?

[1.] Why firſt, ſaith the Lord, *Though hand joyn in hand, the wicked ſhall not be unpunifhed*, *Prov. xi. 21.* Their covering ſhall be too ſhort, and narrow, to hide the blood which God will have difcloſed.

[2.] And nextly, though they will give their power to the beaſt, and fight againſt the Lamb, conſenting in this, who agree in nothing elſe in the world; yet they ſhall be broken in pieces, though they affiliate themſelves they ſhall be broken in pieces. If *Rezin* and the ſon of *Remaliah*, *Syria* and *Ephraim*, old adverſaries, combine together for a new enmity againſt *Judah*: if covenant and prelacy, popery and treachery, blood and (as to that) innocency, joyn hand in hand, to ſtand in the way of the promiſe; yet I will not in this joyn with them, ſays the Lord. Though they were preſerved all diſtinctly in their ſeveral intereſts for ſeven years, in their mutual conflicts, that they might be ſcourges to one another; yet if they cloſe to keep off the engagement of God in the word of his promiſe, not much more than the fourth part of one year ſhall conſume ſome of them to nothing, and fill the reſidue with indignation and anguiſh.

By what means God hath mightily and effectually wrought, by mixing folly with their counſels, putting fear, terror, and amazedneſs upon all their undertakings, to carry on his own purpoſe, I could eaſily give conſiderable inſtances. That which hath been ſpoken in general may ſuffice to bottom us on this, that whiſt we are in the way of God, all ſtaggering at the iſſue is from unbelief; for he can, he will do more ſuch things as theſe.

Uſe 1. My *firſt Uſe* ſhall be as unto temporals; for they alſo, as I told you, come under the promiſe, not to be ſtaggered at, with the limitations before mentioned. Learn hence then to live more by faith in all your actings: Believe and you ſhall be eſtabliſhed: I have in the days of my pilgrimage ſeen this evil under the ſun: many profeſſors of the Goſpel called out to publick actings have made it their great deſign to manage all their affairs with wiſdom and policy, like the men of the

residue of the nations. Living by faith upon the promises hath appeared to them as too low a thing, for the condition and employment wherein they now are; now they must plot, and contrive, and design, lay down principles of carnal fleshly wisdom to be pursued to the uttermost. And what I pray hath been the issue of such undertakings?

(1.) First, the power of religion hath totally been devoured by that lean, hungry, never to be satisfied beast of carnal policy: no signs left that it was ever in their bosoms. Conformity unto Christ in Gospel graces is looked on as a mean, contemptible thing. Some of them have fallen to downright atheism, most of them to wretched formality in the things of God. And then,

(2.) Secondly, Their plots and undertakings have generally proved tympanous and birthless; vexation and disappointment hath been the portion of the residue of their days. The ceasing to lean upon the Lord, and striving to be wise in our doings, like the men of the world, hath made more *Rehoboams*, than any one thing in this generation.

What now lies at the bottom of all this? *Meerly staggering at the promise, through unbelief.* What building is that like to be, which hath a staggering foundation? When God answers not *Saul*, he goes to the Devil. When the promise will not support us, we go to carnal policy: neither can it otherwise be. Engaged men finding one way to disappoint them, presently betake themselves to another. If men begin once to stagger at the promise, and to conclude in their fears, that it will not receive accomplishment, that the fountain will be dry, they cannot but think it high time to dig cisterns for themselves. When *David* says, he shall one day perish by the hand of *Saul*, whatever God had said to the contrary, his next advice is, Let me go to the Philistines: and what success he had in that undertaking, you know. Political diversions, from pure dependance on the promise, do always draw after them, a long time of entanglements.

Give me leave to give a word of caution against one or two things, which men staggering at the promises through unbelief do usually in their carnal wisdom run into, for the compassing of the thing aimed at, that they may not be found in your honourable assembly.

[1.] Take heed of a various management of religion, of the things of God, to the advantage of the present posture and condition of your affairs. The things of Christ should be as *Joseph's Sheaf*, to which all others should bow. When they are made to cringe, and bend, and put on a flattering countenance, to allure any sort of men into their interest, they are no more the things of Christ. I would it had not been too evident formerly, that men entangled in their affairs, enjoying authority, have with all industry and diligence pursued such and such an appearance of religion; not that themselves were so passionately affected with it, but meerly for the satisfaction of some in that, whose assistance and compliance they needed for other things. Oh let not the things of God be immixed any more with carnal reasonings. His truths are all eternal and unchangeable. Give them at once the sovereignty of your souls, and have not the least thought of making them bend to serve your own ends, though good and righteous. Think not to get the promise like *Jacob*, by representing your selves in the things of God for other than you are.

[2.] Hide no truth of God, as to that way of manifestation which to you is committed, for fear it should prove prejudicial to your affairs. That influence and signature of your power which is due to any truth of God, let it not be withheld by carnal reasonings. I might farther draw out these, and such like things as these; the warning is, to live upon the faith of that promise, which shall surely be established, without turning aside to needless, crooked paths of your own.

Use. 2. Secondly, be faithful in doing all the work of God, whereunto you are engaged, as he is faithful in working all your works, whereunto he is engaged. Your work whereunto (whilst you are in his ways) God is engaged, is your safety and protection: God's work whereunto you are engaged, is the propagating of the kingdom of Christ, and the setting up of the standard of the Gospel. So far as you find God going on with your work, go you on with his. How is it that *Jesus Christ* is in *Ireland* only as a *Lion staining all his garments with the blood of his enemies*; and none to hold him out as a *Lamb sprinkled with his own blood*

to his friends? Is it the sovereignty and interest of *England* that is alone to be there transacted? For my part I see no farther into the mystery of these things, but that I could heartily rejoyce, that innocent blood being expiated, the *Irish* might enjoy *Ireland* so long as the moon endureth, so that *Jesus* Christ might possess the *Irish*. But God having suffered those sworn vassals of the *man of sin* to break out into such ways of villainy, as render them obnoxious unto vengeance, upon such rules of government amongst men as he hath appointed; is there therefore nothing to be done, but to give a *cup of blood* into their hands? Doubtless the way whereby God will bring the *followers after the beast* to condign destruction, for all their enmity to the Lord *Jesus*, will be, by suffering them to run into such practises against men, as shall righteously expose them to vengeance, according to acknowledged principles among the sons of men. But is this all? Hath he no farther aim? Is not all this to make way for the Lord *Jesus* to take possession of his long since promised inheritance? And shall we stop at the first part? Is this to deal fairly with the Lord *Jesus*? Call him out to the battel, and then keep away his crown? God hath been faithful in doing great things for you, be faithful in this one, do your utmost for the preaching of the Gospel in *Ireland*.

Give me leave to add a few motives to this duty.

(1.) They want it. No want like theirs who want the Gospel. I would there were for the present one Gospel preacher for every walled town in the English possession in *Ireland*. The *Land mourneth, and the people perish for want of knowledge: many run to and fro*, but it is upon other designs; knowledge is not increased.

(2.) They are sensible of their wants, and cry out for supply. The tears and crys of the inhabitants of *Dublin*, after the manifestations of Christ, are ever in my view. If they were in the dark, and loved to have it so, it might something close a door upon the bowels of our compassion; but they cry out of their darkness, and are ready to follow every one whosoever, to have a candle. If their being Gospelless move not our hearts, it is hoped, their importunate crys will disquiet our rest, and rest help, as a beggar doth an alms.

(3.) *Seducers* and *Blasphemers* will not be wanting to sow their tares, which those fallowed fields will receive, if there be none to cast in the seed of the word. Some are come over thither already without call, without employments, to no other end, but only to vaunt themselves to be God; as they have done in the open streets with detestable pride, atheism, and folly. So that as *Ireland* was heretofore termed by some in civil things a frippery of bankrupts, for the great number of persons of broken estates that went thither; so doubtless in religion it will prove a frippery of monstrous, enormous, contradictory opinions, if the work of preaching the word of truth and soberness be not carried on. And if this be the issue of your present undertakings, will it be acceptable, thank you to the Lord *Jesus*, that you have used his power and might to make way for such things as his soul abhors?

[1.] Will it be for his honour, that the people whom he hath sought to himself with so high a hand, should at the very entrance of his taking possession be leavened with those high and heavenly notions, which have an open and experimented tendency to earthly, fleshly, dunghil practices? Or,

[2.] Will it be for the credit and honour of your profession of the Gospel, that such a breach should be under your hand? that it should be as it were, by your means? Will it not be a sword, and an arrow, and a maul in the hands of your observers? Who can bear the just scandal that would accrue? scandal to the magistrates, scandal to the ministers of this generation, in neglecting such an opportunity of advancing the Gospel; sleeping all the day whilst others sow tares.

[3.] Where will be the hoped, the expected consolation of this great affair, when the testimony and pledge of the peculiar presence of Christ amongst us upon such an issue shall be wanting?

What then shall we do? This thing is often spoken of, seldom driven to any close!

1.) Pray. Pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send out, that he would thrust forth labourers into his harvest. The labourers are ready to say, *There is a lion in the way, difficulties to be contended withal*. And to some men it is hard seeing a call of God through difficulties: when is it would but cloath itself with a

few carnal advantages, how apparent is it to them? they can see it through a little cranny. Be earnest then with the Master of these labourers, in whose hand is their life and breath, and all their ways, that he would powerfully constrain them, to be willing to enter into the fields, that are *white for the harvest*.

2.) Make such provision, That those who will go, may be fenced from outward streights and fears, so far as the uncertainty of human affairs in general, and the present tumultuating perturbations will admit. And let not, I beseech you, this be the business of an unpursued order. But,

3.) Let some be appointed (generals die and sink by themselves) to consider this thing, and to hear what sober proposals may be made by any, whose hearts God shall stir up to so good a work.

This, I say, is a work wherein God expecteth faithfulness from you: stagger not at his promises, nor your own duty. However, by all means possible, in this business I have strived to deliver my own soul.

Once more, to this of faith, let me stir you up to another work of love, and that in the behalf of many poor perishing creatures, that want all things needful for the sustentation of life. Poor parentless children that lie begging, starving, rotting in the streets, and find no relief; yea, persons of quality, that have lost their dearest relations in your service, seeking for bread, and finding none. Oh, that some thoughts of this also might be seriously committed to them that shall take care for the Gospel.

Use 3. I desire now to make more particular application of the doctrine, as to things purely spiritual. Until you know how to believe for your own souls, you will scarcely know how to believe for a nation. Let this then teach us to lay the burden and trouble of our lives upon the right shoulder. In our staggerings, our doubtings, our disputes, we are apt to assign this and that reason of them; when the sole reason indeed is our unbelief. Were it not for such a cause, or such a cause, I could believe; that is, were there no need of faith. That is, faith must remove the mountains that lie in the way, and then all will be plain. It is not the greatness of sin, nor continuance in sin, nor backsliding into sin, that is the true cause of thy staggering, whatever thou pretendest (the removal of all these is from that promise, whose stability and certainty I before laid forth) but solely from thy unbelief, that *root of bitterness, which springs up and troubles thee*. It is not the distance of the earth from the sun, nor the sun's withdrawing itself, that makes a dark and gloomy day; but the interposition of clouds, and vaporous exhalations. Neither is thy soul beyond the reach of the promise, nor doth God withdraw himself; but the vapours of thy carnal, unbelieving heart do cloud thee. It is said of one place, *Christ could do no great work there*. Why so? for want of power in him? Not at all: but merely for want of faith in them, it was *because of their unbelief*. The promise can do no great work upon thy heart to humble thee, to pardon, to quiet thee. Is it for want of fulness and truth therein? Not at all: but merely for want of faith in thee, that keeps it off. Men complain, that were it not for such things, and such things, they could believe; when it is their unbelief that casts those rubs in the way. As if a man should cast nails and sharp stones in his own way, and say, Verily I could run, were it not for those nails and stones; when he continues himself to cast them there. You could believe, were it not for these doubts, and difficulties, these staggering perplexities; when, alas! they are all from your unbelief.

Use 4. See the sinfulness of all those staggering doubts and perplexities wherewith many poor souls have almost all their thoughts taken up. Such as is the root, such is the fruit. If the *tree be evil, so will the fruit be also*. Men do not gather grapes from brambles. What is the root that bears this fruit of staggering? Is it not the *evil root of unbelief*? And can any good come from thence? Are not all the streams of the same nature with the fountain? If that be bitter, can they be sweet? If the body be full of poison, will not the branches have their venom also? Surely if the mother (unbelief) be the mouth of hell, the daughters (staggerings) are not the gates of heaven.

Of the sin of unbelief I shall not now speak at large. It is in sum, the universal opposition of the soul unto God. All other sins arise against something or other of his revealed will, only unbelief sets up itself in a direct contradiction to all of him

that is known. Hence the weight of condemnation in the Gospel is constantly laid on this sin. *He that believeth not, on him the wrath of God abideth: he shall be damned.* Now as every drop of sea water retains the brackishness and saltiness of the whole; so every staggering doubt, that is an issue of this unbelief, hath in it the unfavourableness and distastefulness unto God, that is in the whole.

Farther to give you a little light into what acceptance our staggering thoughts find with the Lord, according to which must be our esteem of all that is in us; observe that,

(1.) They grieve him.

(2.) They provoke him.

(3.) They dishonour him.

(1.) Such a frame grieves the Lord. Nothing more presses true love, than to have an appearance of suspicion. Christ comes to *Peter*, and asks him, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?* John xxi. 15. *Peter* seems glad of an opportunity to confess him, and his love to him, whom not long since he had denied, and answers readily, *Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.* But when Christ comes with the same question again and again, the Holy Ghost tells us, *Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me?* It exceedingly troubled *Peter* that his love should come under so many questionings, which he knew to be sincere. The love of Christ to his is infinitely beyond the love of his to him. All our doubtings are nothing but so many questionings of his love. We cry, *Lord Jesus, lovest thou us?* and again, *Lord Jesus, lovest thou us?* and that with distrustful hearts and thoughts, that it is not, it cannot be. Speaking of the unbelieving *Jews*, the Holy Ghost tells us, *Jesus was grieved for the hardness of their hearts,* Mark iii. 5. And as it is bitter to him in the root, so also in the fruit. Our staggerings and debates, when we have a word of promise, is a grief to his holy Spirit, as the unkindest return we can make unto his love.

(2.) It provokes him. *How can this be,* says *Zechariah*, that I should have a son? This shall be, saith the Lord, and thou thyself for thy questioning shalt be a sign of it, *Thou shalt be dumb, and not speak,* Luke i. His doubting was a provocation. And our Saviour expresses no less, in that bitter reproof to his disciples upon their wavering, *Matth. xvii. 17. O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?* That is, in this unbelieving frame. Poor souls are apt to admire the patience of God in other matters, that he spared them in such and such sins, at such and such times of danger; but his exceeding patience towards them in their carnal reasonings, and fleshly objections against believing, this they admire not. Nay, generally they think it should be so, God would not have them one step farther; nay, they could be more steadfast in believing, as they suppose, might it stand with the good will of God; when all this while this frame of all others is the greatest provocation to the Lord, he never exercises more forbearance than about this kind of unbelief. When the spies had gone into *Canaan*, had seen the land, and brought of the good fruit of it, then to repine, then to question whether God would bring them into it or no, this caused the Lord to swear in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest. When God hath brought men to the borders of heaven, discovered to them the riches and excellency of his grace, admitted them to enter as spies into the kingdom of glory, then to fall a staggering, whether he intends them an entrance or no, is that which lies heavy on him. The like may be said of all promised mercies and deliverances whatsoever. That this is a provocation, the Lord hath abundantly testified, in as much as for it he hath oftentimes snatched sweet morsels from the mouths of men, and turned aside the stream of mercies, when it was ready to flow in upon them. *If,* saith he, *you will not believe, you shall not be established,* Isa. vii. 9. The very mercy but now promised concerning your deliverance shall be withheld. Oh, stop not success from *Ireland* by unbelief.

(3.) It dishonours God. In the close of this Verse it is said, *Abraham was strong in faith* (or staggered not) *giving glory to God.* To be established in believing, is to give God the greatest glory possible. Every staggering thought that ariseth from this root of unbelief, robs God of his glory.

[1.] It robs him of the glory of his truth. *He that believeth not, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not his record,* 1 John v. 10. Let men pretend what

they please, (as most an end we give in specious pretences for our unbelief) the bottom of all is, the questioning of the truth of God in our false hearts.

[2.] It robs him of the glory of his fidelity or faithfulness in the discharge of his promises. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive us our sins*, 1 John i. 9. He hath engaged his faithfulness in this business of the forgiveness of iniquities; he whose right it is: calling that in question, calls the faithfulness of God in question.

[3.] It robs him of the glory of his grace. In a word, if a man should chuse to set himself in an universal opposition unto God, he can think of no more compendious way than this. This then is the fruit, this the advantage of all our staggering; we rob God of glory, and our own souls of mercy.

Use 5. Be ashamed of, and humbled for, all your staggerings at the promises of God, with all your fleshly reasonings, and carnal contrivances issuing therefrom. For the most part we live upon successes, not promises: unless we see and feel the print of victories, we will not believe; the engagement of God is almost quite forgotten in our affairs. We travel on without Christ, like his mother, and suppose him only to be in the croud; but we must return to seek him where we left him, or our journeying on will be to no purpose. When *Job*, after all his complaining, had seen *the end of the Lord*, he cries out, *Now I abhor myself in dust and ashes*. You have seen the end of the Lord in many of his promises; oh, that it might prevail to make you abhor yourselves in dust and ashes, for all your carnal fears, and corrupt reasonings upon your staggerings! When *David* enjoyed his promised mercy, he especially shames himself for every thought of unbelief that he had whilst he waited for it: *I said* (saith he) *in my haste, that all men were liars*: and now he is humbled for it. Is this to be thankful, to forget our provoking thoughts of unbelief, when the mercy is enjoyed? The Lord set it home upon your spirits, and give it to receive its due manifestation.

(1.) If there be any counsels, designs, contrivances on foot amongst us, that are bottom'd on our staggering at the promise under which we are, oh, let them be instantly cast down to the ground. Let not any be so foolish, as to suppose that unbelief will be a foundation for quiet habitations. You are careful to avoid all ways that might dishonour you, as the rulers of so great a nation; oh, be much more careful about such things as will dishonour you as believers; that's your greatest title, that's your chiefest privilege. Search your own thoughts, and if any contrivance, any compliance be found springing up, whose seed was sown by staggering at the promise, root them up, and cast them out before it be too late.

(2.) Engage your hearts against all such ways for the future. Say unto God: How faithful art thou in all thy ways! how able to perform all thy promises! how hast thou established thy word in heaven and earth! Who would not put their trust in thee? We desire to be ashamed, that ever we should admit in our hearts the least staggering at the stability of thy word.

(3.) Act as men bottomed upon unshaken things, that are not at all moved by the greatest appearing oppositions. *He that believeth, will not make haste*: be not hasty in your resolves in any distress; wait for the accomplishment of the vision, for it will come. So long as you are in the way of God, and do the work of God, let not so much as your desires be too hasty after appearing strengthnings and assistance. Whence is it, that there is amongst us such bleating after the compliance of this or that party of the sons of men, perhaps priding themselves in our actings upon unbelief; as though we proclaimed, that without such and such we cannot be protected in the things of God? Let us (I beseech you) live above those things, that are unworthy of the great name that is called upon us.

Oh, that by these, and the like ways, we might manifest our self-condemnation, and abhorrency, for all that distrust and staggering at the word of God, which arising from unbelief, hath had such deplorable issues upon all our counsels and undertakings!

SERMON

SERMON XXXIV.

The Strength of Faith.

ROM. iv. 20.

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.



IN this *Chapter* the Apostle singeth out a signal example, to make good the conclusion which by sundry convincing demonstrations he had proved in the foregoing *Chapter*; namely, that the justification of a sinner could by no means be brought about, nor accomplished, but by the righteousness of faith in Christ. This, I say, in the example of *Abraham*, and from the testimonies given concerning him, and the way whereby he was justified before God, the Apostle proves from the beginning of the *Chapter* to the end of *ver. 17*. From thence to the end of *ver. 22*, he describes that faith of *Abraham*, whereby he obtained acceptation with God, that in all things he might propose him as an example, and an encouragement unto us.

Among the many excellencies which are given in, in the description of this faith of his, arising from its cause, object, matter, and manner, not now to be insisted on, this is none of the least which is mentioned in my text: *He staggered not*.

There is a *metonymy* in the words, wherein by a negation, the contrary to what is denied, is strongly asserted. *He staggered not by unbelief*, that is, *He was stedfast in believing*; or as it is expounded in the close of the verse, *he was strong in faith*.

The words may yield us these two observations:

Observation 1. *All staggering at the promises of God is through unbelief.*

Saith the Apostle: *He staggered not through unbelief*. Men are apt to pretend many other reasons, and do use other pleas; but the truth is, all our staggering is through unbelief. But this proposition from these words I have long since in another way proved, evinced, and applied *.

There is another proposition lies in the text, and that I shall now apply myself unto, which is this:

Observation 2. *Stedfastness in believing the promises is exceeding acceptable unto God.*

In treating upon this subject I shall do these two things:

I. Explain the terms of the proposition.

II. Give the proof of it.

I. As to the former of these,

1. There is the object concerning which the affirmation is laid down: *The promises*, the promises of God. The promises of God are the declaration of the pur-

* See the preceding Sermon.

poses of his grace towards his elect, according to the tenor of the covenant. That pointed unto in my text, was the old great promise of Christ, which contains in it all others; because *in him all the promises of God are yea and amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. So that although I shall speak nothing but what will be true with reference to every promise of God whatever; yet I shall bear a chief respect to the promises that exhibit Christ, and the free grace of God in him unto sinners: steadfastness in believing these promises.

2. There is the act that is exercised about this object: and that is, *believing*. It is steadfastness in believing we speak of.

I shall not make it my design to insist much on the nature of faith, and to debate the differences that are among men about it; only so much must be spoken concerning it, as may give us an acquaintance with that whereof we are treating.

How many have been the disputes of men about the nature of faith? The subject, proper object, formal reason of it all know. And how little the Church of God is beholding to men, who have made it their business to involve things of general duty and absolute necessity unto all believers in intricate disputes, men that will duly weigh it may easily know. By some mens too much understanding others are brought to understand nothing at all. He that would have the things of his own spiritual experience and daily duty made them unintelligible to him, let him consider them as stated in mens philosophical disputes about them. Thus some place faith in one distinct faculty of the soul, some in another, and some say there are no such things as distinct faculties in the soul. Some place it in both the chief, the understanding and the will; and some say, it is impossible, that one habit should have its residence in two faculties.

For my part, my intention principally is to speak to such as God chuseth; the poor and foolish of the world; and the means whereby he will bring them to himself, are not, I am sure, above that understanding which the sons of God hath given them, 1 Joh. v. 20. And whereas the general way in treating of faith, is, for the most part, to use strictness of expression, that so it may be delivered in a philosophical exactness; the constant way of the Holy Ghost is by metaphorical expressions, accommodations of it to things of sense and daily usage in the meanest, to give a relish and perception of it, to all that are interested in it. And so shall I labour to speak, that every one that doth believe, may know what it is to believe.

Only observe this by the way: That I speak of believing and of faith in respect of that end, and to that purpose only, in reference whereunto Paul here treats of it; that is, in respect of justification, and our acceptation with God. I say then,

(1.) That faith, or *believing*, in this restrained sense doth not consist solely in the assent of the mind to the truth of the promises, or of any promise. When one affirms any thing to us, and we say we believe him, that is, that the thing he speaks is true, then there is this assent of the mind, without this there is no faith; but this alone is not the faith we speak of. This alone and solitary the Devils have, and cannot chuse but have it, Jam. ii. 19. *They believe* that which makes them tremble, on the authority of God who revealeth it.

But you will say The Devil believes only the threats of God; that which makes him tremble; and so his belief is not a general assent, but partial; and is thereby distinguished from our assent, which is to all that God hath revealed, and especially the promises.

I Answer: the Devil believes the promises no less than he doth the threats of God; that is, that they are true, and shall be accomplished. It is part of his misery, that he cannot but believe them. And the promises of God are as much suited to make him tremble, as his threatnings. The first promise to us was couched in a threatening to him, Gen. iii. 15. And there is no promise wherein a threatening to him is not couched. Every word concerning Christ, or grace by him, speaks his downfall and ruine. Indeed his destruction lies more in promises, than threats. Promises are what weakens him daily, and gives him a continual foretaste of his approaching destruction.

On this consideration it is evident, that *believing*, or faith, cannot be solely an assent to the truth of these promises, upon the fidelity of the promiser; but this it is also, or originally. Hence it is called, *the receiving the testimony of God*, and therein

therein *setting to our seal that God is true*, Joh. iii. 33. But yet I think there is somewhat more in receiving of the testimony of God, and setting our seal to it (agreeing as in contracts, that so it is, and so it shall be) than the bare assent of the mind to the truth of the promises. Although in ordinary speech, to receive a man's testimony, is no more, than to believe what he saith of that concerning which he speaks is true. But there seems moreover in the annexed expression of *setting to our seal*, that that is included, which he speaks of to *Job*, Cap. v. 27. *Hear it, and know it for thy self*. There is a receiving of it for our selves, in those expressions, which add much to a bare assent. I say then, this assent is of faith, though it be not faith. And in saying it is not justifying faith, we do not deny it, but affirm it to be faith in general. The addition of a peculiar assent destroys not the nature of a thing. Now faith in general is such an assent as hath been described.

(2.) It is not in the sole consent of the will to close with the promise, as containing that which is good and suitable. There is the matter of the promise to be considered in believing, as well as the promise it self. Christ with his righteousness and benefits is, as it were, tendered unto us therein. Whence by believing we are said to accept of, to *receive the atonement*, Rom. v. 11. Now to consent that the matter of the promise, that which is exhibited in the word of it, is good and desirable, and so to us, and to choose it on that account, is required to believing also; and it is properly the *receiving* of Christ, *Job*. i. 12. but yet it is not only, precisely, and exclusively this. *Sarah's* faith *Heb.* xi. 11. is described by this, that she *judged him faithful*, who had promised. And this is of the nature of faith, as was said before, the *judging him faithful that promiseth*, and assenting to the truth of his promises on that account. Now the first of these may be without the second: our assent may be without the consent of the will; but the latter cannot be without the former. But yet there is such an assent, as will certainly produce this choice also.

(3.) I suppose I need not say, it doth not entirely consist in the good liking of the affections, and embracing the things promised. *The stony ground received the word presently, and with joy*, Matth. xiii. 20. It is said, *ver.* 5. that *the seed sprung up immediately because it had not depth of earth*. Where men have warm affections, but not thoroughly prepared minds and hearts, they presently run away with the word, and profess great matters from it; but where it is laid in deep, it is longer commonly before it appears. When a man receives the word only in the affections, the first touch of them cannot be hid; instantly he will be speaking of it, melt under it, and declare how he is affected with it: Oh, this Sermon hath done me good indeed. But yet this is not faith, when it is alone. They *receive the word with joy, but have not root in themselves*, *ver.* 21. When Christ promised *the bread of life*, that is, himself, *John* vi. How many were instantly affected with it, and carried out to strong desires of it? *Lord, say they, evermore give us this bread*, *ver.* 34. They like it, they desire it at that season, their affections are taken with it; but yet they were but *περιπατοι*, temporary, not true believers; for after a season *they went back, and walked no more with Christ*, *ver.* 66. Those who *have a taste of the heavenly gift*, *Heb.* vi. 6. do you not think they like the taste, and are affected with it? There are indeed innumerable deceits in this business. I might shew on how many false and corrupt accounts, on what sandy foundations many mens affections may be exceedingly taken with the word of promise, preached, or considered; so that there is no concluding of believing to lie in any such thing. When affections go before believing, they are little worth; but when they follow it, they are exceeding acceptable and precious in the sight of God.

(4.) It is not solely *fiducia*, a trust, affiance, or confidence. There is a twofold fiducial trust: One whereby we trust in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, which you may call adherence. It is such a cleaving to Christ, as that we trust in him for the forgiveness of sins, and acceptation with God. And so much as we trust, so much we adhere, and no more. There is also a trust, that our sins are forgiven us, we trust, or rest upon it. Now it cannot be, that either of these should be faith entirely, and that the whole of it should be included in them. There is something more in believing, than in trusting; and something more in trusting, than is absolutely necessary to preserve the entire notion of believing. For we may believe that, wherein we do not trust. But yet this I grant, that where there is believing in Christ, there will be trusting in him more or less. And when faith is

increased to some good height, strength, and steadfastness, it is mainly taken up in trust and confidence, *Joh. xiv. 1.* So to believe, as to free our hearts from trouble and disquietment upon any account whatever, is to trust properly. And that doubting, and staggering, and fear, which in Scripture we find condemned as opposite to faith, are indeed directly opposite to this fiduciary reposing our souls on Christ. So the Apostle describes his faith, or believing, *2 Tim. i. 12.* So to believe, as to be persuaded that God is able to keep what we commit to him, is to put our trust in him.

(5.) Having spoken thus much of these particulars, waving all the arbitrary determinations of the schools, and exactness of words as to philosophical rules and terms; I shall give you such a general description of faith, or believing, as may answer in some measure the proper and metaphorical expressions of it in the Scriptures; where it is termed, *looking or seeing, hearing, tasting, resting, rolling* our selves, *flying for refuge, trusting*, and the like.

[1.] There must be what I spake of in the first place, an assent to the whole truth of the promises of God, upon this ground and bottom, that he is able and faithful to accomplish them. This certainly is in, if it be not all, our *receiving the testimony*, or *witness of God*, *Joh. iii. 33.* *Sarah*, of whom we spake before, *received the testimony of God.* How did she do it? She *judged him faithful who had promised*, *Heb. xi. 11.* This God proposes to us in the first place. *Eternal life is promised by God who cannot lye*, *Tit. i. 2.* that is, who is so faithful, as that it is utterly impossible he should deceive any. So *Heb. vii. 17, 18.* *Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.* The design of God is, that we may receive encouragement in our *flying for refuge to the hope set before us*, that is, in believing. What doth he propose to this end? Why his own faithfulness and immutability, on the account of the engagement of his word and oath. *Abraham's faith* spoken of *Rom. iv.* comprizeth this; yea is commended from it, *ver. 21.*

The Scripture indeed mentions sundry properties of God, on the credit whereof, if I may so speak, our souls are to assent to the truth of his promises, and to acquiesce therein. Two especially are usually named.

1.) His power: *He is able.* So *Rom. iv. 21.* *Cap. xi. 23.*

2.) His faithfulness: as in the places before mentioned, and sundry others.

The sum is, that on the account of God's faithfulness and power, this we are to do, if we will believe, we are to assent to the truth of his promises, and the certainty of their accomplishment. If this be not done, it is in vain to go forward. Let then those, who intend any advantage by what shall afterwards be spoken, stay here a little and consider, how they have laid this foundation. Many there are, who never come to any stability all their days, and yet are never able to fix on any certain cause of their shaking and staggering: the foundation was laid disorderly. This first closing with the faithfulness and power of God in the promises, was never distinctly acted over in and by their souls. And if the foundation be weak, let the building be never so glorious, it will totter, if not fall. Look then to this beginning of your confidence, that this fail you not. And when all other holds fail this will support you from utter sinking, if at any time you are reduced to that condition that you have nothing else.

[2.] Over and above this, faith in the Scripture is expressed, and we find it by experience to be, the will's consent unto, and acceptance of the Lord *Jesus Christ* as mediator, he that accomplished his work, as the only way of going to the Father, as the sole and sufficient cause of our acceptation with him, as our only righteousness before him.

It hath been said, that faith is the receiving of Christ as a priest, and a Lord, to be saved by him, and ruled by him. This sounds excellent well. Who is so vile, that endeavouring to believe, is not willing to be ruled by Christ, as well as saved by him? A faith that would not have Christ to be Lord to rule us, is that faith alone which *James* rejects. He that would be saved by Christ, and not ruled by him, shall not be saved by him at all. We are to receive a whole Christ, not by halves; in regard of all his Offices, not one or another.

This sounds well, makes a fair shew; and there is in some regard truth in what is spoken; but, *Latet anguis in herba*, Let men explain themselves, and it is this: The receiving of Christ, as a King, is the yielding obedience to him. But that subjection is not a fruit of the faith whereby we are justified, but an essential part of it; so that there is no difference between faith and works or obedience in the business of justification, both being a like a condition of it.

When I lately read one saying, "That this was one principle that the Church of England went on in the reformation, that faith and works have the same consideration in the business of justification;" I could not but stand amazed, and conclude, that either he or I had been a sleep ever since we were born; or that there were two Churches of England, one that I never knew, and another that he never knew; or else that prejudice is powerful, and makes men confident. Is that the doctrine of the Church of England as they call it? When, where, by whom was it taught; but by Papists and Socinians, until within a very few years in England? What place hath it in *confessions, homilies, liturgies, controversy writers*, or any else of repute for learning and religion in England? But this is no place for contest.

Others at length mince the matter, and say, That faith and works have the same respects to our justification that shall be publick and solemn at the last day, at the day of judgment. And is this all that they have intended? How they will justify themselves at the day of judgment, for troubling the peace of the saints of God, and shaking the great fundamental articles of the reformation, I know not; but it is no news for men loving novelties to dispute themselves they know not whither, and to recoil or retire unhandsonely.

It is true then, we acknowledge that faith receives Christ as a Lord, as a King; and it is no true faith that will not, doth not do so; and puts the soul upon all that obedience which he, as the captain of our salvation, requires at our hands. But faith, as it justifies (in its concurrence, whatever it be, thereunto) closeth with Christ for righteousness and acceptation with God only. And give me leave to say, it is in that act no less exclusive of good works, than of sin. It closeth with Christ in and for that, on the account whereof he is our righteousness, and for and by which we are justified.

But you will say: This makes you *Solifidians*, and are you not justly so accounted?

I say: So was Paul a *Solifidian*, whose *Epistles* will confute all the formalists and self-justitaries in the world. We are *Solifidians* as to justification: Christ, grace, and faith are all. We are not *Solifidians* as to salvation, nor Gospel conversation; nor the declaration of the efficacy of our believing. Such *Solifidians*, as exclude every thing from an influence in our justification, but our acceptation by the grace of God, on faith's receiving of Christ for righteousness and salvation, were all the Apostles of Jesus Christ. Such *Solifidians*, as exclude, or deny, the necessity of works, and Gospel obedience to him that is justified; or that say, a true and justifying faith may consist without holiness, works, and obedience, are condemned by all the Apostles, and James in particular.

This then, I say, is required to faith, or believing that we thus receive Christ. *John. i. 11. His own received him not.* The not receiving of Christ for such purposes as he is sent unto us by the Father, is properly unbelief. And therefore, as it follows, the so receiving him is properly faith, or believing, ver. 12. Thus in preaching the Gospel we are said to make a tender, or profer of Christ, as the Scripture doth, *Rev. xxii. 17.* Now that which answers a tender, or profer, is the acceptance of it. So that the soul's willing acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ for our righteousness before God, being tendred to us in the promises of the Gospel for that end and purpose, from the love of the Father, is the main of that believing which is so acceptable unto God.

[3.] Add hereunto, that which I cannot say is absolutely of the nature of faith, but in some degree or other, secret or more known to the soul, a necessary concomitant of it; and that is, the soul's resting and queting itself, and satisfying its affections in its interest in, and enjoyment of a sweet, desirable Saviour. This is called *cleaving unto the Lord*, *Josh. xxiii. 8.* the fixing and fastning our affections on God, as ours in covenant. This is the soul's resting in God, its alliance, and trusting in him.

And

And in these three things, which are intelligible to the meanest soul, and written evidently in the words of the Scripture, and in the experience of those who have to do with God in Christ, do I place the believing, which is so acceptable to God.

3. There is next the qualification of this believing, as laid down in the proposition, and that is, *Stedfastness*, stedfastness in believing. This is included in the negative. It is said of *Abraham*, that *he staggered not*; that is, *he was stedfast*. To clear this up a little, take these few observations.

(1.) Faith, or *believing*, consists in such an habitual frame of heart, and such actings of the soul, as are capable of degrees, of straightning or enlargement, of strength and weakness. Hence there is mention in the Scripture of great faith, *O woman great is thy faith*; and of little faith, *O ye of little faith*: of strong faith, *Abraham was strong in faith*; and of weak faith, or being weak in faith, *Him that is weak in the faith receive*: of faith with doubting, *O ye of little faith, why did ye doubt?* and of faith excluding doubting, *Being strong in faith he staggered, or doubted not*.

(2.) That faith in every respect is equal as unto sincerity, and differs only in degrees; yea, it is equal in respect of the main effects and advance of it, in justification, perseverance, and salvation. A little faith is no less faith than a great faith; yea, a little faith will carry a man as safely to heaven, though not so comfortably nor so fruitfully, as a great faith. Now

(3.) *Stedfastness* respects those different degrees of faith. It is not of the nature of faith, but bespeaks such a degree of it, as is acceptable to God that we should have, and every way advantageous to ourselves. It is mentioned by *Peter*, 2 *Ep.* iii. 17. *Take heed lest you fall from your own stedfastness, or, decline from that stability in believing*, which you have attained: and by *Paul*, *Col.* ii. 5. So that,

(4.) There may be a true faith, that yet may have many troublesome, perplexing doubtings accompanying it: many sinful staggerings and waverings attending it; and yet not be overthrown, but continue true faith still. Men may be true believers, and yet not strong believers. A child that eats milk, hath as truly the nature of a man, as he that being grown up lives on strong meat. Now stedfastness denotes stability in believing, in respect of the three things before mentioned, and by it faith is denominated strong, and effectual. And it argues,

[1.] A well grounded, firm, unshaken assent to the truth of the promises; and so it is opposed to wavering, *James* i. 5, 6.

[2.] A resolved, clear consent to receive and close with Christ, as tendered in the promise for life; and so it is opposed to doubting, that is, troublesome, disquieting, perplexing doubts.

[3.] The settled acquiescence of the soul in the choice made, and the close consented unto; and so it is opposed to abiding trouble, *John* xiv. 1.

This *stedfastness* in believing doth not exclude all temptations from without. When we say a tree is firmly rooted, we do not say that the wind never blows upon it. The house that is built on the rock, is not free from assaults and storms. The Captain of our salvation, the beginner and ender of our faith was tempted; and we shall be so, if we follow him. Nor doth it exclude all doubting from within. So long as we have flesh, though faith be stedfast, we shall have unbelief; and that bitter root will bring forth some fruit, more or less, according as *Satan* gets advantage to water it. But it excludes a falling under temptation, and consequently that trouble and disquietness which ensues thereon: as likewise abiding, perplexing doubts, which make us stagger to and fro, between hope and fear, questioning whether we close with Christ or not, have any interest in the promise or not, and is attended with disconsolation and dejectedness of spirit, with real uncertainty of the event.

This then is that which I intend by *stedfastness in believing*: The establishment of our hearts in the receiving of Christ, as tendered by the love of the Father, to the peace and settlement of our souls and consciences. And that our hearts should be thus fixed, settled, and established, that we should live in the sense and power of it, is, I say, exceeding acceptable unto God.

There is a twofold evil and miscarriage among us in the great foundation business of closing with Christ in the promise. Some spend all their days in much darkness and disconsolateness, disputing it to and fro in their own thoughts, whether their portion and interest lie therein or not. They are off and on, living and dying, hoping and fearing, and commonly fear most when they have best hold, for that is

the nature of doubting. When they are quite cast down, then they set themselves a work to get up; and when they are up to any comfortable persuasion, instantly they fear that all is not well and right; it is not so with them as it should be; and thus they stagger to and fro all their lives, to the grief of the spirit of God, and the discomfort of their own souls.

Others beginning a serious closing with Christ upon abiding grounds, and finding it a work of difficulty and tediousness to flesh and blood, relapse into generals, enquire no more, but take it for granted, that as much is done as they can accomplish, and so grow formal and secure.

To obviate both these evils I shall confirm the *proposition* laid down; but before I proceed to that I shall draw some *Corollaries* that arise from what hath been spoken in the explication of the *proposition* already insisted on.

Corollary 1. Though a little, weak faith, where steadfastness is wanting, will carry a man to Christ and heaven, yet it will never carry him comfortably, nor pleasantly thither.

He who hath but a weak faith, shall be put to many desperate plunges; every blast of temptation shall cast him down from his consolation, if not turn him aside from his obedience. At best he is like a man bound in a chain on the top of an high tower; though he cannot fall, yet he cannot but fear, however it will have a good issue.

Corollary 2. The least true faith will do its work safely, though not so sweetly.

True faith in the least degree gives the soul a share in the first resurrection. It is of the vital principle which we receive, when we are quickned. Now be it never so weak a life we have, yet it is a life that shall never fail. It is of the seed of God which abideth, incorruptible seed, that dieth not. A believer is spirit, is quickned from the dead, be he never so young, never so sick, never so weak, he is still alive, and the second death shall have no power over him. A little faith gives a whole Christ. He that hath the least faith, hath as true an interest, though not so clear an interest, in the righteousness of Christ, as the most steadfast believer. Others may be more holy than he, but not one in the world is more righteous than he; for he is righteous with the righteousness of Christ. He cannot but be low in sanctification, for a little faith will bring forth but little or low obedience; if the root be weak, the fruit will not be great. But he is beneath none in justification. The most imperfect faith will give present justification, because it interests the soul in a present Christ. The lowest degree of true faith gives the highest compleatness of righteousness, *Col. ii. 10.* You who have but a weak faith, have yet a strong Christ. So that though all the world should set itself against your little faith, it should not prevail. Sin cannot do it, Satan cannot do it, hell cannot do it. Though you take but weak and faint hold on Christ, he takes sure, strong, and unconquerable hold on you. Have you not often wondered, that this spark of heavenly fire should be kept alive in the midst of the sea? It is everlasting, a spark that cannot be quenched, a drop of that fountain that can never be wholly dried up. Jesus Christ takes special care of them that are weak in faith, *Isa. xl. 11.* On what account soever they are sick, and weak, and unable, this good Shepherd takes care of them; *He shall rule, and they shall abide, Mich. v. 4.*

Corollary 3. There may be faith, a little faith, where there wants steadfastness, and is much doubting.

Stedfastness is an eminent qualification that all attain not to; so that there may be faith where there is doubting, tho' I do not say there must be. Doubtings in themselves are opposite to believing. They are, if I may so say, unbelieving. A man can hardly believe all his days and never doubt; but a man may doubt all his days, and never believe. If I see a field overgrown with thistles and weeds, I can say, there may be corn there; but yet the thistles and weeds are not corn. I speak this, because some have no better bottom for their quiet, than that they have been disquieted, that they have doubted. Doubting may be where faith is; but we cannot conclude, that where there is doubting, there is faith; for they may rise against presumption and security, as well as against believing. Yet observe there is a two-fold doubting:

(1.) Of the end. Men question what will become of them in the close; they fluctuate about what will be their latter end. Did not *Balaam* do so, when he

cried: *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his?* That wretched man was tossed up and down between hopes and fears. This is common to the vilest person in the world. It is but the shaking of their security, if they be alone.

(2.) About the means. The soul doubts whether it loves Christ, and whether Christ loves it, or not. This is far more genuine than the former. It discovers at least, that such a soul is convinced of the excellency and usefulness of Christ, and that it hath a valuation for him. Yea, perhaps this may be jealousy from fervency of love sometimes, and not always from weakness of faith. But however with these doubtings, faith, at least a little faith, may consist. So was it with the poor man who cried out: *Lord, I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.* There is believing and unbelieving, faith and doubting, both at work at the same time, in the same person: *Jacob and Esau struggling in the same womb.*

Use. Let not men from their doubting conclude to their believing. He that satisfies himself that his field hath corn because it hath thistles, may come short of an harvest. If thy fears be more about the end than the means, more about future happiness than present communion with God, thou canst scarce have a clearer argument of a false, corrupt frame of heart. Some flatter themselves with this, that they have doubted and trembled, but now they thank God they are quiet and at rest. How they came to be so, they cannot tell; only whereas they were disquieted and troubled, now all is well with them. How many of this sort have I known, who whilst convictions have been warm upon them, have had many perplexing thoughts about their state and condition; after a while their convictions have worn off, and their doubtings thence arising departed, and they have sunk down into a cold, lifeless frame? This is a miserable bottom of quiet. If there were no way of casting out doubts and fears but by believing, this were somewhat. But presumption and security will do it also, at least for a season.

But these things fall in only by the way, in reference to what was spoken before.

II. I proceed now to confirm the proposition laid down, according to the explanation given of it before.

1. And this I shall do first from Scripture testimonies.

(1.) Take the text itself: *He was strong in faith, giving glory to God.* All that God requires of any of the sons of men is his glory, that he will not give unto another, *Isa. xlii. 8.* Let God have his glory, and we may take freely whatever we will. Take Christ, take grace, take heaven, take all. The great glory which he will give to us, consists in giving him his glory, and beholding of it. Now if this be the great thing, the only thing that God requires at our hands, if this be the all which he hath reserved to himself, that he be glorified as God, as our God, he that gives him that, gives him what is acceptable to him. Thus *Abraham* pleased God, by being strong or steadfast in believing: *He was strong in faith, and gave glory to God.*

The *glory of God* is spoken of in various senses in the Scripture.

[1.] The Hebrew word *כבוד* signifies *pondus*, or *weight*, whereunto the Apostle alludes when he speaks of *an eternal weight of glory*, *2 Cor. iv. 17.* This is the glory of the thing itself. It likewise signifies *splendor*, or *brightness*, where the Apostle in like manner speaks of *the brightness of glory*, *Heb. i. 2,* which is the greatness and excellency of beauty in all perfections. In this sense the infinite excellency of God, in his inconceivable perfections, raised up in such brightness as utterly exceeds all our apprehensions, is called his *glory*. And so he is *the God of glory*, *Acts vii. 2,* or *the most glorious God*: and our Saviour is called, *the Lord of glory*, *1 Cor. ii. 8,* in the same sense. In this respect we can give no glory to God; we can add nothing to his excellencies, nor the infinite inconceivable brightness of them, by any thing we do.

[2.] Glory relates not only to the thing itself that is glorious, but to the estimation and opinion we have of it, that is, *δόξα*: when that which is in itself glorious, is esteemed so. The philosopher saith, *Gloria est frequens de aliquo fama cum laude*: or, *Consentiens laus bonorum, incorrupta vox bene judicantium de excellenti virtute.* And in this respect, that which is infinitely glorious in itself, may be more or less glorious in its manifestation, and the estimation of it: so glory is not any of God's excellencies or perfections, but it is the esteem and manifestation of them amongst and unto others.

This God declares to be his glory, *Exod. xxxiii. 19. Moses* desires to see the glory of God; this God calls his *face*, that is, the glory of God in itself: This, saith God, thou canst not see: *Thou canst not see my face, or the brightness of my essential glory*, the splendor of my excellencies and perfections. Well, what then, shall he have no acquaintance with it? After this God places him in a rock, and tells him, there he will shew him his glory; and this he doth under the name of his backparts; that is, he will declare to him wherein, and how his glory is manifested. *Now this rock that followed them was Christ, 1 Cor. x. 4.* The Lord places *Moses* in that rock to shew him his glory, intimating that there is no glimpse of it to be obtained, but only by them who are placed in Christ Jesus. Now what is this glory of God, which he thus shewed to *Moses*? That he declares, *Chap. xxxiv. 6*, causing his majesty, or some visible signs of his presence, *to pass before him*, he *proclaims* the name of God with many gracious properties of his nature and blessedness. As if he should say: *Moses*, wouldst thou see my glory? This is it; that I may be known to be *the Lord, the Lord gracious and merciful*; let me be known to be this, and thus, and this is the glory I aim at from the sons of men.

See now how steadfastness in believing gives glory to God. It advanceth and magnifieth all these properties of God, and gives all his attributes their due exaltation. An excellent estimation of them is included in it. Might I here descend to particulars, I could manifest, that there is not any property of God, whereby he hath made himself known to us, but steadfastness in believing gives it the glory which in some measure is due unto it; and that all doubting arises from our calling some divine attribute into question. It were easy to shew how this gives God the glory of his faithfulness, truth, power, righteousness, grace, mercy, goodness, love, patience, and whatever else God hath revealed himself to be.

This then is the force of this first testimony: If the glory of God be all that he requires at our hands, and this steadfastness in believing gives him this glory, and this alone doth so, it must needs be acceptable unto him.

(2.) A testimony of the same importance is *Heb. vi. 17, 18. The heirs of the promise*, those to whom it is made, the great promise of Christ, are believers; these are said here, *to fly for refuge, καταφυγόντες, the fliers with speed*: the expression is evidently metaphorical. The allusion, say some, is taken from those who ran in a race for a prize. This, they say, the word *καταλαμβάνει*, that follows, which signifies *to take fast hold on*, doth import. Men that run in a race, when they attain the end, seize on, and lay fast hold of the prize.

Our translators, by rendring the word *flying for refuge*, manifest that they had respect to the manslayers flying to the city of refuge under the Old Testament: and this way go sundry interpreters. And I am inclined to this acceptance of the metaphor upon a double account.

[1.] Because I think the Apostle would more willingly allude to an *Hebrew* custom, writing to the *Hebrews* touching an institution of God, and that directly typical of the matter he had in hand; than to a custom of the *Greeks* and *Romans* in their races, which hath not so much light in it, as to the business in hand, as the other.

[2.] Because the design of the place doth evidently hold out *a flying from something*, as well as *a flying to something*; in which regard it is said, that there is *consolation* provided for them, namely, in their deliverance from the evil which they feared and fled from. Now in a race there is indeed a prize proposed, but there is no evil avoided. It was otherwise with him that fled for refuge; for as he had a city of safety before him, so he had the avenger of blood behind him; and he fled with speed and diligence to the one, that he might avoid the other. Now these cities of refuge were provided for the manslayer, who having slain a man at unawares, and being thereby surprized with an apprehension of danger, it being lawful for the avenger of blood to slay him, fled with all his strength to one of those cities, where he was to enjoy immunity and safety.

Thus a poor sinner finding himself in a condition of guilt, surprized with a sense of it, seeing death and destruction ready to seize upon him, flies with all his strength to the bosom of the Lord *Jesus*, the only city of refuge, from the avenging justice of God, and curse of the law. Now this *flying* to the bosom of Christ, the hope set before us for relief and safety, is believing. It is here called *flying* by the Holy Ghost, to express the nature of it to the spiritual sense of believers. What now doth

doth he declare himself to be affected with their *flying for refuge*, that is their believing? Why he hath taken all means possible to shew himself abundantly willing to receive them. He hath engaged his word and promise, that they may not in the least doubt or stagger, but know that he is ready to receive them, and give them *strong consolation*. And what is this consolation? Whence may it appear to arise? Whence did consolation arise to him, who having slain a man at unawares should fly to a City of refuge? must it not be from hence, the gates of the City would certainly be open to him, that he should find protection there, and be safe guarded from the revenger? Whence then must be our strong consolation, if we thus fly for refuge by believing? must it not be from hence, that God is freely ready to receive us, that he will in no wise shut us out, but that we shall be welcome to him; and with the more speed we come, the more welcome we shall be? This he convinces us of, by the engagement of his word and oath to that purpose. And what farther testimony would we have, that our believing is acceptable to him?

It is said, *Heb. x. 38. If any man draw back, the Lord's soul hath no pleasure in him.* What is it to draw back? It is to decline from his steadfastness of believing. So the Apostle interprets it, *ver. 39. We are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe.* Drawing back is opposed to believing. In these drawers back, that come not up to steadfastness in believing, or labour so to do, the Lord's *soul hath no pleasure*; that is, He exceedingly abhors and abominates them, which is the force of that expression. His delight is in those, who are steadfast in adhering to the promises, in them his soul takes pleasure.

When the Jews treated with our Saviour about salvation, they ask him *what they shall do that they may work the work of God*, Joh. vi. 28. that work of God by which they might come to be accepted with him, which is the cry of all convinced persons. Our Saviour's answer is, *ver. 29. This is that work of God, that you believe.* Will ye know the great work, wherein God is so delighted? It is this, saith he, *that you believe*, and be steadfast therein.

Hence also are the many exhortations that are given us by the Holy Ghost to come up hereunto, as *Heb. xii. 12. Isa. xxxv.* But I shall not farther insist on testimonies, which exceedingly abound to this purpose. The farther demonstrations of the point ensue.

2. The next shall consist in the farther improvement of the first testimony concerning the glory of God, arising from our being steadfast in believing.

This is granted by all, that God's ultimate end in all things he doth himself, and in all that he requires us to do, is his own glory. It cannot be otherwise, if he be the first, only, independent being, and prime cause of all things, and their chiefest good. God having then placed his glory in that which cannot be attained and brought about without believing, in answer to his present constitution of things, it must needs be acceptable to him; as is a suitable means to a designed end, to any ones acting in wisdom and righteousness.

Bear in mind, I pray, what it is that I mean by believing. Though the word be general and large, yet in my intendment it is restrained to the particulars insisted on, namely the constant establishment of our souls in receiving the Lord Jesus, tendered unto us in the truth and from the love of the Father, for the pardon of sins, and acceptance of our persons before God. This, I say, according to God's constitution of things in the covenant of grace, is necessary to bring about that end of glory to himself which he aims at. Hence he sums up his whole design to be *the praise of his glorious grace*, Eph. i. 6.

In *Prov. xxv. 2.* if I mistake not, this is clearly asserted: *It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, or, to cover a matter.* I told you before what is the glory of God. It is not the splendor and majesty of his infinite and excellent perfections, which arise not from any thing he doth, but from what he is; but it is the exaltation, manifestation, and essence of those excellencies. When God is received, believed, known to be such, as he declares himself, therein is he glorified; that is his glory. This glory, saith the holy Ghost, arises from the covering a matter.

What matter is this? It is not the glory of God to cover every matter, all things whatever; yea, it is his glory to *bring to light the hidden things of darkness*. The manifestation of his own works declares his glory; *Psal. xix. 1.* So doth the manifestation of the good works of his people, *Matth. v. 16.* It is then things of some peculiar

peculiar kind that are here intended. The following opposition discovers this: *It is the glory of a king to find out a matter.* What matter is it, that it is the glory of the King to find out? Is it not faults and offences against the law? Is it not the glory of magistrates to find out transgressions, that the transgressors may be punished? This is the glory of the magistrate, to enquire, find out, and punish offences, transgressions of the law. It is then, in answer hereunto, a sinful thing, sin it self, that is the matter or thing which it is the glory of God to cover. But what is it to cover a sinful matter? It is that which is opposed to the magistrates finding it out; what that is, we have a full description in *Job*, Chap. xxix. 16, 17. *The cause I knew not, I searched out, and brake the jaws of the wicked.* It is to make judicial inquisition after, to find out hidden transgressions, that the offenders may be brought to condign punishment. So that God's concealing a matter, is his not searching, with an intention of punishment, into sins and sinners, to make them naked to the stroke of the law. It is his hiding of sin from the condemning power of the law.

The word here used is the same with that of *David*, *Psal.* xxxii. 1. *Blessed is the man whose sin is covered.* And in sundry other places is it used to the same purpose; which is expressed *Mich.* vii. 17. by *casting all our sins into the bottom of the sea.* That which is so disposed of, is utterly covered from the sight of men. So doth God express the covering of the sins of his people, as to their not appearance to their condemnation, they shall be *cast into the bottom of the sea.* Hence are our sins in the New Testament said ἀφέναι, which we translate *forgiven* and *to forgive*, and ἀφesis, *forgiveness*, in twenty places. The word signifies properly *to remove*, or *dismiss* one: ἀμαρτήματα ἀφέναι, is *Peccata missa facere*, *to send or remove away our sins out of sight*; the same in substance with that which is here called *to cover.* And so is the word used in another business, *Matth.* xxiii. 23. ἀφέναι τὰ βαρύτερα τῶν νόμων, *you have omitted the weightier things of the Law*; that is, you have laid them aside as it were out of sight, taking no care of them. Now the bottom of all these expressions of *removing*, *hiding*, *covering*, and *concealing sin*, which gives life and significancy to them, making them import forgiveness of sin, is the allusion that is in them to the mercy-seat under the law. The making and use of it, we have *Exod.* xxv. 17, 18. It was a plate of pure gold lying on the ark called כפרת or a *covering*. In the Ark was the law written on tables of stone. Over the mercy-seat, between the *Cherubims*, was the oracle representing the presence of God. By which the holy Ghost does signify, that the mercy seat was to cover the law, and the condemning power of it, as it were, from the eye of God's justice, that we be not consumed. Hence is God said *to cover sin*, because by the mercy seat he hides that which is the strength and power of sin, as to its guilt and tendency unto punishment. The Apostle calls this *mercy seat*, τὸ ἱλαστήριον, *Heb.* ix. 5. That word is used but once more in the New Testament, and then Christ is called so, *Rom.* iii. 25. Or Ὁν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς τὸ ἱλαστήριον, *whom God hath proposed as a mercy seat.* Christ alone is that mercy seat, by whom sin, and the law, from whence sin hath its rigor, is hidden. And from that typical institution is that expression in the Old Testament: *Hide me under thy wings*; the wings of the *Cherubims*, where the mercy seat was; that is, in the bosom of Christ.

Now, saith the holy Ghost, thus to hide, to cover, to pardon sin by Christ, is the glory of God, wherein he will be exalted and admired, and for which he will be praised. Give him this, and you give him his great aim and design. Let him be believed in, trusted on, as God in Christ, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, so reconciling the world to himself, and manifesting his glorious properties therein, and he hath his end.

Should I now proceed to shew what God hath done, what he doth, and will do, to set up this his glory, it would make it evident indeed, that he aimed at it. His eternal, electing love lies at the bottom of this design, this is the tendency of it, that God may be glorified in the forgiveness of sin. The sending of his son, a mystery of wisdom, goodness, and righteousness past finding out, with all that by his authority, and commission he did, suffered, and doth, was that his name might be glorified in this thing. Hath the new covenant of grace any other end? Did not God on purpose propose, make and establish that covenant in the blood of his Son, that whereas he had by his works of creation and providence, by the old cove-

nant and law, given glory to himself in other respects, he might by this glorify himself in the hiding of iniquity? The dispensation of the spirit for the conversion of sinners, with all the mighty works ensuing thereupon, is to the same, and no other purpose. Wherefore doth God exercise patience, forbearance, long suffering towards us, such as he will be admired for to eternity, such as our souls stand amazed to think of? It is only that he may bring about this glory of his, the covering of iniquity, and pardoning of sin.

Now what is it, that on our part is required, that this great design of God for his glory may be accomplished in and towards us? Is it not our believing, and stedfastness therein? I need not stay to manifest it; nor yet to give farther light or strength to our inference from what hath been spoken; namely, that if these things are so, then our believing and stedfastness therein is exceeding acceptable to God.

3. For the last demonstration of the point I shall add the consideration of one particular, that God useth in the pursuit of his glory before mentioned, and that is, his institution and command of preaching the Gospel to all nations, and the great care he hath taken to provide instruments for the propagation of it, and promulgation therein of the word of his grace, *Matth. xxviii. 19. Go preach the Gospel to all nations: to every creature*, *Mark xvi. 15.* What is this Gospel, which he will have preached and declared? Is it any thing but a declaration of his mind and will concerning his gracious acceptation of believing, and stedfastness therein? This God declares of his purpose, his eternal, unchangeable will, that there is by his appointment an infallible, an inviolable connexion between believing on *Jesus Christ*, the receiving of him, and the everlasting fruition of himself; this he declares to all, but his purpose to bestow faith effectually relates only to some: they *believe who are ordained to eternal life*. But this purpose of his will, that believing in Christ shall have the end mentioned, righteousness and salvation in the enjoyment of himself, concerns all alike. Now to what end hath the Lord taken care, that this Gospel shall be so preached and declared, and that to the consummation of the world, but that indeed, our believing is acceptable to him?

But I shall desist from the pursuit of this demonstration, wherein so many things offer themselves to consideration, as that the naming of them must needs detain me longer from my principal aim, than I am willing.

SERMON XXXV.

THE *Use* of the point insisted on is to encourage to the duty so commended and exalted; or it contains motives unto stedfastness in believing the promises. Amongst the many that are usually insisted on to this purpose, I shall chuse out some few that seem to be most effectual thereunto.

Use 1. We shall begin with the consideration of God himself, even the Father, and that declaration of his love, kindness, tenderness, readiness, and willingness to receive poor believers, which he hath made of himself in Christ *Jesus*. According as our apprehensions are of him and his heart towards us, so will the settlement of our souls in cleaving to him by believing be. We are amongst men free and easy with them whom we know to be of a kind, loving, compassionate disposition; but full of doubts, fears, and jealousies when we have to deal with those who are morose, peevish and froward. Entertaining hard thoughts of God ends perpetually in contrivances to fly, and keep at a distance from him, and to employ our selves about any thing in the world, rather than to be treating and conversing with him. What delight can any one take in him, whom he conceives to be always furious, wrathful

ful, ready to destroy? Or what comfortable expectation can any one have from such an one? Consider then in some particulars what God declares of himself, and try in the exercising of your thoughts thereon, whether it be not effectual to engage your hearts to steadfastness in believing the promises, and closing with the Son of his love tendered in them.

(1.) He gives us his name for our support, *Isa. l. 10.* He speaks to poor, dejected, bewildered, fainting sinners: give not over, let not go your hold, though you be *in darkness* to all other means of support and consolation, yet *trust in the name of the Lord.* And, saith he, in case you do so, this *name shall be a strong tower* unto you, *Prov. xviii. 10.* And what this name of God, which is such a stay and safe defence is, is declared at large, *Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.* This name of his, is that glory which he promised to shew to *Moses, Chap. xxxiii.* to be known by this name is that great glory of God, which he aims to be exalted in; yea, and God is so fully known by his name, and the whole of the obedience he requireth of us is so ordered and disposed in the revelation thereof, that when our Saviour had made him and his whole will known from his bosom, he sums up his whole work in this: *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world,* *Joh. xvii. 6.* The manifestation of the name of God to the elect, was the great work of Christ on the earth, as he was the prophet and teacher of his Church. He declared the name of God, his gracious, loving, tender nature, his blessed properties that were fit to encourage poor creatures to come to him, and to trust in him. This then is his name with whom we have to do in this matter. The name he hath given himself for us to know him, and call him by, that we may deal with him as such, as his name bespeaks him to be. He is gracious, loving, ready to pity, help, receive us, delighting in our good, rejoicing in our approach to him. This he hath proclaimed of himself, this his only Son hath revealed him to be. He is not called *Apollyon*, a *Destroyer*; but the *Saviour of men.* Who would not venture on him, in and by the way which himself hath appointed and approved?

(2.) As is his name, so is his nature. Saith he of himself, *Isa. xxvii. 4. Fury is not in me.* He speaks with reference to his Church, to believers, of whom we are speaking. There is no such thing as that anger and wrath in God in reference to thee, whereof thou art afraid. Hast thou had hard thoughts of him? Hast thou nothing but entertained affrighting reports concerning him, as though he were a devouring fire, and endless burnings? Be not, saith he, mistaken, *fury is not in me.* He hath not one wrathful, revengeful thought towards thee. No, *take hold of his strength, and you shall have peace,* ver. 5. Nay, *he is love,* 1 *Joh. iv. 9, 16.* of an infinitely loving and tender nature; all love, there is nothing in him that is inconsistent with love it self. We see how a little love, that is but a weak affection in the nature of a man, will carry a tender father towards a child. How did it melt, soften, reconcile the father of the prodigal in the parable? *Oh, my son Absalom, would to God I had died for thee,* saith *David,* a poor father in distress for the death of a rebellious child. How will a child bear himself above dread and terror, under many miscarriages, upon the account of the love of a tender father? What then shall we say, or think of him, who is love in the abstract, whose nature is love? May we not conclude, that certainly he *is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and great in mercy,* as the *Psalmist* speaks, *Psal. ciii. 8.* According as we are by degrees led into an acquaintance with God in his properties, (for we are led into it by degrees and steps, not being able at once to bear all the glory which he is pleased here to shine upon us with) so are we amazed with his several excellencies. Experiences of any property of God as engaged in Christ, and exercising it self for our good, is greatly conquering to the soul: but none so much as this, his being love, and ready to forgive on that account. Such is the frame of the Church, *Mich. vii. 18. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by transgression?* Can it enter into the heart of man? Oh, who is like to him? Is it possible he should be thus to sinners? This discovery overwhelms the soul, and strengthens it in faith and trust in him.

There is a general compassion in God, by which he proceeds in the dispensation of his providence, that is too hard for the apprehensions of men, when they come to be concerned in it. Poor *Jonah* was angry that he was so merciful, *Chap. iv. 2.*

I knew

I knew that thou wast not one for me to deal with, thou art so *gracious and merciful, slow to anger, of such kindness, and repentest thee of the evil*, that it is not for me with any credit or reputation to be engaged and employed in thy work and service. And if God be thus full of compassion to the world, which to day is, and to morrow shall be cast into the fire; is he not much more loving and tender unto you? *O, ye of little faith!* Suit then the thoughts of your hearts in your dealing with God to this revelation, which he hath made of his own nature. He is good, love and kindness itself, fury is not in him, he is ready to forgive, accept, embrace. And,

(3.) According to his name and nature, so are his dealings with us, and his actings towards us. From him who is so called, so disposed, we may expect that what he doth in a suitableness thereunto, he will do with great readiness and cheerfulness, that so he may answer his name, and express his nature. How then will he shew and manifest these things? See *Isa. lv. 7. He will have mercy*: he is love, *he will have mercy*; yea, *he will abundantly pardon*: But how will he do it? *ver. 8. Alas!* you cannot think how: *His thoughts are not as your thoughts*. You have poor, low, mean thoughts of God's way of pardoning, you can by no means reach to it or comprehend it: raise your apprehensions to the utmost, yet you come not near it, *ver. 9. As the heavens are higher than the earth; so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts*. But doth not God then pardon as we do? come hardly to it, through many persuasions, and at length do it *ἐκ δυνάμεως καὶ οὐκ ἐκ θυμῆς*, with an unwilling kind of willingness, that ingenious spirits had almost as willingly have our wrath, as our pardon? No such thing. What he doth he doth with his whole heart, and his whole soul, *Jer. xxxii. 41.* and rejoices in the doing of it, *Zeph. iii. 17. He will have mercy, he will abundantly pardon*; he will do it with his whole soul; he will rejoice in his so doing, and rest in his love. I know not what we can desire more to assure us of free acceptance with him. You will say perhaps, that this is but sometimes; and it is well if we can come nigh him in that season. Nay, but he is acting herein suitably to his name and nature, his whole soul, and his whole heart is in it; and therefore he will take a course for the accomplishing of it, *Isa. xxx. 18. He will wait to be gracious*; his heart is set upon it, and he will take advantage to accomplish his desire and design. And if our stubbornness and folly be such as to be ready to wear out his patience, to make him *weary*, as he complains, *Isa. xliii. 24*, and to cause him *to serve* beyond the limits of his patience; he will be exalted, take to himself his great power for the removal of our stubbornness, that he may be merciful unto us: one way or other he will accomplish the desire of his heart, the design of his grace.

For the farther clearing of this truth, take along with you these few considerations of God's dealing with us, and his condescension therein, that he may act suitably to his own nature and name.

[1.] His comparing himself to creatures of the most tender and boundless affection; *Isa. xlix. 15, 16.* This is as high as we can go. The affection of a mother to a sucking child, the child of her womb, is the utmost instance that we can give of love, tenderness, and affection. This, says God, you cannot think, you ought not to imagine, that a tender, loving mother should not have compassion on a *sucking child, the son of her womb*. Things will act according to their natures, even tygers love their own offspring. And shall a woman forget her sucking child? But yet, saith God, raise up your apprehensions to this, take it for granted that she may do so, which yet without offering violence to nature cannot be imagined, *yet I will not forget you*. This will not reach my love, my affection. Were we as secure of the love of God to us, as we are of the love of a good gracious mother to her sucking child, whom we see embracing of it, and rejoicing over it all the day long, we would think our estate very comfortable and secure. But alas! what is this to the love of God to the meanest saint on the earth? What is a drop to the ocean? What is a little dying, decaying affection, to an infiniteness, an eternity of love? See the working of this love in God, *Hos. xi. 8, 9. Jer. xxxi. 20.*

[2.] His condescension to entreat us that it may be so, that he may exercise pity, pardon, goodness, kindness, mercy towards us. He is so full, that he is, as it were pained until he can get us to himself, that he may communicate of his love unto us. *We pray you*, says the Apostle, *in Christ's stead, as if God by us did beseech you*.

What

What to do? What is he so earnest about? What would God have of us? Some great thing, some difficult service assuredly. No, says he, but *be reconciled to God*, 2 Cor. v. 20. Says God, Oh, ye sons of men, *why will you die?* I beseech you, be friends with me, let us agree, accept of the atonement. I have love for you, take mercy, take pardon, do not destroy your own souls. *This is the rest wherewith you may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing*, Isa. xxviii. 12. Remember how the Scripture abounds with exhortations and entreaties to this purpose.

[3.] In condescension to our weakness, he hath added his oath to this purpose. Will we not yet believe him? Will we not yet venture upon him? Are we afraid that if we put ourselves upon him, into his hand, he will kill us; we shall die? He gives us this last, possible relief against such misgiving thoughts. Swear unto me that I shall not die, is the utmost that any one requires, when with the greatest ground of mistrust he gives up himself to him that is mightier than he. Now, *as I live, saith the Lord, I would not the death of a sinner*, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Methinks this should put an end to all strife. We have his *promise* and *oath*, Heb. vi. 18. and what would we have more? He is of an infinite, loving, and tender nature, he entreats us to come to him, and swears we shall not suffer by our so doing. Innumerable other instances of the like kind might be given, to evidence the actings of God towards us to be suitable to his name and nature before insisted on.

Now the end aimed at, as you know, in these considerations, is by them to encourage our hearts in the belief of the promises. It is God with whom therein we have to do. The things we receive by our believing are excellent, desirable, what alone we want, and which will do us good to eternity. The difficulties of believing arise from our unworthiness, and the terror of him with whom we have to do. To disentangle our souls from under the power of such fears and considerations, this in the first place is proposed, the tender, gracious, loving nature of him, with whom herein we have to do. Fill your hearts then with such thoughts of God as these, exercise your minds with such apprehensions of him: the *Psalmist* tells you what will be the issue of it, *Psal. ix. 10. They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee*: establishment in believing will ensue. If we know the name of God, as by himself revealed, know the love and kindness wrapped up therein, we cannot but trust him. Let us be always thinking of God, with a clear persuasion that so it is, that he is gracious, loving, ready to receive us, delighting, rejoicing to embrace us, to do us good, to give us mercy and glory, whatever he hath promised in Christ; and it will exceedingly tend to the establishment of our hearts.

But now concerning the things that have been spoken, great caution is to be used. It is not a general notion of the nature of God that I have been insisting on; but the goodness and love of God to his in Christ *Jesus*. Wherefore farther to clear this whole business, and that a sure foundation may be laid of this great thing, I desire to add the following observations.

1.) I acknowledge that all that can be said, by all or any of the sons of men, concerning the goodness, loveliness, kindness of God in his own blessed nature, is inconceivably, infinitely below what it is in itself. What a little portion is it that we all know of his goodness? Though we have all his works and his whole word to teach us; yet as we have no affections large enough to entertain it, so no faculty to receive or apprehend it. Admiration, which is the soul's *nonplus*, its doing it knows not what, the winding of it up until it stands still, ready to break, is all that we can arrive unto in the consideration hereof. His excellencies and perfections in this kind are sufficient, superabundant for the engagement of the love and obedience of all rational creatures; and when they can go no farther, they may with the *Psalmist* call in all their fellow creatures to the work. Nor can any man exercise himself in a more noble contemplation, than that of the beauty and loveliness of God. How great is his goodness? How great is his beauty? They who have nothing but horrid, harsh apprehensions of the nature of God, that he is insupportably severe and wrathful, know him not. To have thoughts of him as cruel and sanguinary, to make use of his greatness and infinite excellencies only to frighten, terrify, and destroy the work of his hands, who is good, and doth good, who made all things good, in beauty and order, and who loves all the things that he hath made,

who hath filled all that we see, or can think on, with fruits of his goodness, is unreasonable, unjust, and wicked. Consider God and his works together as he made them, and in the order by him assigned to them; there is nothing in his nature towards you but kindness, benignity, goodness, power exerted to continue to you the goodness first imparted, grace and bounty in daily, continual additions of more.

But alas! they are sinners of whom we speak. It is true, in God, as he is by nature, there is an abundant excellency and beauty, a ravishing goodness and love for the endearing of his creatures, as he made them, they could desire no more; the not loving him above all for his loveliness, for the suitableness of his excellencies to bind their hearts to him as their chiefest and only good, was the sin of some of them: but now the whole state of things is changed, upon a supposition of the entrance of sin. God indeed is not changed, his excellencies and perfections are the same from eternity to eternity; but the creature is changed; and what was desirable and amiable before to him, ceases to be so to him, though it continue to be so in itself. He who whilst he stood in the law of his creation had boldness with God, was neither afraid nor ashamed, after he had sinned, trembled at the hearing of his voice, yea, endeavoured to part with him for ever, and to hide himself from him. What property of God was more endearing to his creatures than his holiness? How is he glorious, lovely, desirable above all to them who abide in his image and likeness? But as for sinners, they cannot serve him, because of his holiness, *Job*. xxiv. 19. In the revelation of God to sinners, together with the discovery of the excellencies before mentioned, of his goodness, kindness, graciousness; there is also a vision given of his justice, wrath, anger, severity, and indignation against sin. These unconquerably interpose between the sinner and all emanations and fruits of goodness and love. Whence, instead of being endeared to God, their contrivance is that of *Micah* vi. 7, 8. and upon a conviction of the successlessness of any such attempts, they cry out, *Who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* *Isa.* xxxiii. 14. A desire to avoid him to all eternity is all that a sinner's most choice consideration of God, in his own essential excellencies, can lead him to. For who will set the thorns in battle against him? Who will bring the stubble that is fully dry to a consuming fire? And therefore it is, that those who propose general grace from a natural goodness in God, as a ground of consolation to sinners, when they come to answer that objection: Yea, but God is just, as well as merciful: do with many good words take away with one hand just as much as they give with the other. Apprehend, say they, God's gracious nature, he is good to all, trust upon it, believe not them that say otherwise. But he is just also, and will not let any sin go unpunished, and therefore cannot but punish sin according to its demerit. Where is now the consolation spoken of? Wherefore observe,

2.) That since the entrance of sin, there is no apprehension, I mean for sinners, of a goodness, love, and kindness in God, as flowing from his natural properties, but upon an account of the interposition of his sovereign will and pleasure. It is most false, which by some is said, that special grace flows from that which they call general grace, and special mercy from general mercy. There is a whole nest of mistakes in that conception. God's sovereign, distinguishing will is the fountain of all special grace and mercy. *I will*, saith he, *cause all my glory to pass before thee*; and *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*, *Exod.* xxxiii. 19. *Rom.* ix. 15. Here is the fountain of mercy, even the will of God. He is of a merciful and gracious nature, but dispenses mercy and grace by his sovereign will. It is electing love that is at the bottom of all special grace, all special kindness: whence *the election obtains, when the rest are hardened*, *Rom.* xi. 7. He *blesseth us with spiritual blessings, according as he hath chosen us*, *Ephes.* i. 3, 4. God having made all things good, and imparted of the fruits of his goodness to them, might without the least injury to, or restraint of his own goodness, have given over all them who sinned, and came short of his glory, to an everlasting separation from him. That he deals otherwise with any of them, is not from any propensity in his nature and goodness towards their relief, but from his sovereign, wise, gracious will, wherein he most freely purposed in himself to do them good by Christ, *Ephes.* i. 9.

This I say then, all considerations of the goodness and mercifulness of the nature of God, and of general grace on that account, are so balanced in the soul of a sinner

by those of his justice and severity, so weakened by the experience all men have of the not exerting those properties effectually for the good of all that are pretended to have a right thereunto, that they are no ground, as so considered, of consolation to sinners. And if any one should venture to draw nigh unto God, on the account of such general grace, he would meet the sword of justice before he would lay hold upon him. So that,

3.) Where there is mention in the Scripture made of the goodness of God, by which he reveals himself to be love, to be gracious, and tender, it is not upon the general account of his perfections considered in himself, but on the new and special account of the free engagement of his attributes in Christ, with regard to his elect. Such expressions as far as they have a spiritual tendency, and are not restrained to the law of providence, belong to the covenant of grace, and God manifested in Christ. And this is that which is intended by our divines, who say, That it is not naturally from the goodness of God, that he doth good to sinners, but from his gracious will. For were it not for that, all communications of the other unto sinners would be everlastingly shut up.

This then is that which we are to close withal: the gracious nature of God, even the Father, as manifested in Christ, on the ground of the atonement made for sin. This is he whom the poor, weak believer hath to do withal. This is he who invites us to the acceptance of Christ in the promises: he with whom we have principally to do in all this affair. He is love, ready, willing to receive and embrace those who come to him by Christ. Be convinced of his good will and kindness, his patience to us ward, and we cannot but be established in closing with his faithfulness in his promises.

4.) Observe who it is of whom I am speaking. It is believers, those who are interested in God by Christ. Let others then, such as are not so, take heed lest they abuse and wrest the doctrine of the grace of God to their own destruction. I know nothing is more common with men of vain and light spirits, formalists, yea, and open, presumptuous sinners, than to say and think God is merciful; there is yet good hopes on that account, he made not men to damn them, and whatever preachers say, it will, at least it may, be well with us at last. But poor creatures! even this God, of whom we have been speaking, *is a consuming fire: a God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*: a God that will not let the least sin go unpunished. And the greater is his love, his goodness, his condescension to those who come in unto him upon his own terms by Christ; the greater will be his wrath and indignation against those who refuse his tender of love in his own way, and yet *add drunkenness to thirst, and say they shall have peace, though they walk in the imaginations of their own hearts*.

Use 2. Let a second motive be taken from the excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom by believing we do close with and receive. Now the excellencies of his person are such, as not only may engage us to come to him to attain them; but they are all suited to encourage us in our coming, to support us, and make us steadfast in our believing. *

Use 3. We may likewise to the same purpose consider the promises of God; wherein both his love, and the excellency and suitableness of the Lord Jesus Christ are signally and eminently expressed. Many things to very good purpose are usually spoken of the promises, their nature, stability, preciousness, efficacy, centring all in one covenant; their confirmation in Christ is usually insisted on, being those in particular which the soul in believing closes withal. I shall at present pitch on these two things.

(1.) The infinite condescension the Lord useth in them, for the obviating all the objections and fears of our unbelieving hearts.

(2.) The manifestation of his wisdom and love in suiting them to the most pressing wants, troubles, disquietments, and fears of our souls, that we must needs see his intentment in them to do us good.

(1.) The first of these might be evinced by sundry sorts of instances. I shall insist on one only, and that is the unexpected relief that is laid up in them for us, exhibiting grace and mercy, when any thing in the world might rather be looked for:

* Upon this head, in its several branches, see his Book, Of Communion with God, from p. 76, to 101.

This, with the use of it, I shall manifest by an induction of some particular promises which are generally known to all.

Isa. xliii. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. Here are persons guilty of sundry sinful follies. The Lord chargeth them home upon their consciences to their trouble and disquietment; he makes them go with wounds and blows upon that account. They had neglected his worship, and *not called on his name*. And whereas they could not utterly cast off all performance of duties, yet what they did abide in the performance of, was exceeding burdensome to them; they were weary of it, yea, weary of God therein; and of all spiritual communion and converse with him: *Thou hast been weary of me*. Their convictions compelled them to do God some service; but it was, as we say, a death to them; they were weary of it; and most things, either as to the matter or manner that God required, they utterly neglected. What then says God of himself in reference to this state of theirs? Notwithstanding all my patience, *thou hast made me weary of thee*; like one that hath an hard service, that cannot abide in it; it is a bondage, says God, for me to have any thing to do with thee. Suppose we now a poor soul, fully convinced, that thus is the state and condition with him; so powerful is his unbelief and corruption, that he is weary of God and his ways; it may be he would faintly have it otherwise, and therefore binds himself to the performance of duties, if so be that God thereby may be flattered: but withal because of his innumerable follies, God also is weary of him; that he can bear the bondage of him no longer; he is *weary of serving*. What can such an one conclude with himself, but that everlasting separation from God, will be the close of this dispensation? He is *weary of God*, and God is *weary of him*; surely then they must part, and that forever. What remedy is there, or can there be? Poor soul lie down in darkness.

But see now what God says in this case, and what an unexpected condescension there is in the word of promise. Is it, Be gone? take a bill of divorce? take thine own course, and I will take mine against thee? No, says God, this is an estate and condition whereof *I am weary*, and *thou art weary*; I am weary of thy multiplying the guilt of sin, thou art wearied in serving the power of thy sin; I will put an end to this state of things, we will have peace again between us: *I will blot out thy sins, and remember thine iniquities no more: I, even I, will do it*. He redoubles the word passionately, emphatically to call to mind who he is, with whom in this condition we have to do: *I, even I*, who am God and not man, I whose thoughts are not as your thoughts; I who am great in mercy, and who will abundantly pardon, I will do it.

Yea, but saith the poor convinced soul, I know no reason why thou should'st do so, I cannot believe it; for I know not upon what account I should be so dealt withal. Says God, I know full well that there is nothing in thee, upon the account whereof I should thus deal with thee; there is nothing in thee, but for what thou deservest to be everlastingly cut off: but quiet thy heart, I will do it *for my own sake*. I have deeper engagements on my own account for this, than thou canst look into.

Doubtless such a word as this coming in, when God and the soul are at the point of giving over and parting fellowship; when the soul is ready to do so indeed, and hath great cause to think that God will be first therein; then contrary to all expectation, and above all hopes; must needs constrain it to cry out, as *Thomas* upon sight of the wounds of Christ: *My Lord and my God*. Let the soul that cannot get it self unto any steadfastness in closing with Christ in the promises; that staggers, and is tossed to and fro, between hopes and fears, being filled with a sense of sin and unworthiness, dwell a while upon the consideration of this unexpected surprisal, and give up it self to the power of it.

Isa. lvii. 17, 18. Gives me another instance to the same purpose. This seems to be the description of a man totally rejected of God. The most dejected sinner can hardly make a more deplorable description of his condition, though ready enough to speak all the evil of himself, that he can think of. Let us see how things are disposed. There is an *iniquity* found in him and upon him, that the soul of God abhors. In this evil there is a continuance, until God manifest himself to take notice of it, and to be provoked with it: *I was wroth*, saith God, and took a course to let him know so; *I laid my hand upon him and smote him*, in some outward dispensation, that he could not but take notice that *I was wroth*. Upon this

this smiting it may be he begins to seek and pray, but I am not found of him: *I hid me*, I let him pray, but took no notice of him, but hid my self in wrath. Surely this will do, he will now leave his iniquity and return to me. Nay, saith God, he grows worse than ever, neglecting my smiting, hiding, wrath: *He goes on frowardly in the ways of his own heart.*

God had appointed in the law, that when a son was rebellious against his parents, and grown incorrigible therein, he should be *stoned with stones*. What shall be done then with this person, who is thus incorrigible under the hand of God? Says God: *I have seen his ways*, it will not be better. Shall I destroy him, consume him, make him as *Admah* and *Zeboim*? Ah! *my bowels are turned in me, my repentings are kindled together: I will heal him.* If he goes on thus, and no outward means will do him good, he must perish; but *I will heal him*. He wounded his soul, I also have wounded him in the blows I gave him, when I was wroth. *Is he not my dear child? Since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy on him,* Jer. xxxi. 20. He shall have wine and oyl, grace and pardon for all his wounds. But Alas! he is not able to go one step in God's ways, he is so wonted to his own. Leave that to me, saith God: *I will lead him*; I will give him strength, guidance, and direction to go in my way. *I will lead him, yea and give him comfort also.*

Now if any one cannot in some measure bring his condition within the verge and compass of this promise, it is hard with him indeed. And as I know the necessity of that duty and usefulness of searching our hearts for the fruits of the spirit in us, whereby we are made meet for communion with God, which are all evidences of our acceptance with God, and pardon of sin thereon; so, I dare say, these are promises that will sufficiently warrant a perplexed soul to close with Christ, as tendered from the love of the Father, even when it can find in it self no other qualifications or conditions, but only such as render it every way unworthy to be accepted. We do not say to a poor, naked, hungry, harbourless man, Go, get thee cloaths, get thee food, get thee an habitation, and then I will give thee an alms: no, but because thou wantest all these, therefore I will give thee an alms. Because thou art poor, blind, polluted, guilty, sinful, I will give thee mercy, says God.

Yea, but at least a man's sense of his state and condition, with his acknowledgment of it, is needful to precede his closing with the promise. It is so, as to his receiving of it, this oftentimes being the fruit and work of the promise as given it self. But as to the tender of the promise, and Christ in the promise unto us, it is not so. When did God give the great promise of Christ to *Adam*? was it when he was sorrowing, repenting, qualifying his soul? No, but when he was flying, hiding, and had no thoughts but of separation from God. God calls him forth; and at once tells him what he had deserved, pronounces the curse, and gives him the blessing. *I raised thee up*, saith Christ, *under the apple-tree, there thy mother brought thee forth*, Cant. viii. 5. From the very place of sin, Christ raises up the soul. So *Isa. xlv. 12. Hearken to me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness.* Here are two notable qualifications, stout-heartedness and remoteness from righteousness. What saith God to them, *ver. 13*? He discourses to them of mercy and salvation. And *Chap. lv. 1. Buy*, saith he, *wine and milk*. Yea, but I have nothing to buy withal, and these things require a price: Indeed so they do, but take them *without money, and without price*. But he calls on them only, who are *thirsty*. True, but it is a thirst of indigency and total want, not a thirst of spiritual desires, for in whomsoever that is, they have already tasted of this wine and milk, and are blessed, *Matth. v.* Nay we may go one step farther; *Prov. ix. 4, 5.* Christ invites them to his *bread and wine*, who have no heart. This commonly is the last objection that an unbelieving heart makes against it self, it hath no mind to Christ. Indeed he hath no heart for Christ, but yet, saith Christ, thou shalt not thus go off, I will not admit of this excuse; you that have no heart, *turn in hither.*

Now, I say, this obviating of all objections, by unexpected appearances of love, mercy, and compassion in the promises, is a strong inducement unto stedfastness in believing. When a soul shall find, that God takes for granted, that all is true, which it can charge it self withal, that its sin, folly, unbelief, heartlessness, is so, as he apprehends it, and unconceivably worse than he can think; that he takes for granted

granted all the aggravations of his sins that lie so dismally in his eye; his backsliding, frowardness, greatness of sin, impotency, coldness at the present, not answering in affection to the convictions that are upon him; and notwithstanding all this, yet come, let us agree, accept of peace; close with Christ, receive him from my love; surely it cannot but in some measure engage it into a rest and acquiescence in the word of promise.

(2.) The second part of this motive, is taken from the suitableness of the promises to every real distress and cause of staggering whatever. My meaning is, that whereas we are exercised with great variety of doubts and fears, of pressures and perplexities, God hath tempered his love and mercy in Christ, as prepared in the promises, unto every one of these wants and straits whatever. Had God only declared himself to us, as God Almighty, God allsufficient, he might justly require and expect that we should act faith on him in every condition. But moreover, he hath as it were drawn out his own allsufficiency in Christ into numberless streams, flowing in upon all our particular wants, distresses and temptations whatever. When God gave manna in the wilderness, it was to be gathered and ground in mills, or beat in mortars, and fryed in pans, before it could be eaten, *Numb. xi. 8.* But the bread which came from heaven, the manna in the promises, is already ground, beaten, baked, ready for every one's hunger. It is useful, if you have a well about your house, whither you may repair to draw water; but when you have several pipes from a fountain that convey water to every room, for every particular business, you are greatly to blame, if your occasions are not supplied. We have not only a well of salvation to draw water from, but also innumerable streams flowing from that well into every empty vessel.

I shall give one or two instances of this kind.

Isa. xxxii. 2. Here are four pressures and troubles mentioned, whereunto we may be exposed, [1.] *The wind.* [2.] *A tempest.* [3.] *Dearth.* [4.] *Weariness.* And unto all these is the man in the promise, the Lord Jesus Christ, the King that reigns in righteousness, ver. 1. suited as a supply in them, or against them.

[1.] The first proposed evil is *the wind*; and in respect hereof Christ is an *hiding place*. He that was ready to be cast from the top of a rock with a strong wind, would desire nothing more than an hiding place, until the strong blast were over. When fierce winds have driven a vessel at sea from all its anchors, so that it hath nothing to keep it from splitting on the next rock whereunto it is driven; a safe harbour, an hiding place, is the great desire and expectation of the poor creatures that are in it. Our Saviour tells us what this wind is, *Matth. vii. 25.* The wind that blows upon and casts down false professors to the ground, is the wind of strong and urging temptations. Is this the condition of the soul? strong temptations beat upon it, which are ready to hurry it down into sin and folly, that it hath no rest from them, one blast immediately succeeding another, that the soul begins to faint, to be weary, give over, and say, I shall perish, I cannot hold out to the end? Is this thy condition? See the Lord Christ suited unto it, and the relief that is in him, in this promise He is an *hiding place*. Saith he, These temptations seek thy life, but with me thou shalt be safe. Fly to his bosom, retreat into his arms; expect relief by faith from him, and thou shalt be safe.

[2.] There is a *tempest*, in a reference whereunto Christ is here said to be a *covert*. A tempest in the Scripture represents the wrath of God for sin. *He breaks me*, saith *Job*, *with a tempest*, Chap. ix. 17. when he lay under a sense of the displeasure and indignation of God. He threatens to *rain upon the wicked an horrible tempest*, *Psal. xi. 6.* A tempest is a violent mixture of wind, rain, hail, thunder, darkness, and the like. Those who have been at sea, will tell you what a tempest means. Such was that in *Egypt*, *Exod. ix. 23.* There was *thunder, and hail, and fire running upon the ground: fire or dreadful lightning mingled with hail*, ver. 24. What did men now do upon the apprehension of this tempest? They *made their servants and cattle flee into the houses*, ver. 20. got them into safe covert, that they might not be destroyed, and they were safe accordingly.

Suppose a poor creature to be under this tempest, full of sad and dreadful thoughts and apprehensions of the wrath of God; behind, before, round about he can see nothing but hailstones and coals of fire, heaven is dark and dismal over him, he hath not seen sun, moon, or stars in many days, not one glimpse of light from a-

bove, or hopes of an end. I shall perish, the earth shakes under me, the pit is opening for me. Is there no hopes? Why, see how Christ is suited in this distress also. He is a *covert* from this *tempest*; get into him, and thou shalt be safe. He hath borne all this storm, as far as thou art concerned, abide with him, and not one hurtful drop shall fall upon thee, not one hair of thy head shall be singed with this fire. Hast thou fears? hast thou a sense of the wrath of God for sin? dost thou fear it will one day fall upon thee and be thy portion? Behold a covert, a sure defence is here provided.

[3.] There is *drought*, causing barrenness, making the heart as a dry place, as an heath, or a parched wilderness. In reference whereunto Christ is a *river* of water, abundantly, plentifully flowing for its refreshment. Drought in the Scripture denotes almost all manner of evil, it being the great, distressing punishment of those countries. When God threatens sinners, he says, they *shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good (or water) cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness*, Jer. xvii. 6. he shall be left to barrenness and want of all refreshment. And *David* complains in his great distress, that his *moisture was turned into the drought of summer*, Psal. xxxii. 4.

Two things are evidently in this drought: want of grace, or moisture, to make the soul fruitful; and want of rain or consolation to make it joyful. Barrenness and sorrow or disconsolation are in this dry place. Let us then suppose this condition also. Doth the soul find it self like the parched ground? It hath no moisture to enable it to bring forth fruit; but is dry, sapless, all the fruits of the spirit seem to be withered, faith, love, zeal, delight in God, not one of them flourishes; yea it thinks they are quite dead, it hath no showers, not any drop of consolation, no refreshment, but pines away under barrenness and sorrow? What would now best suit such a condition? Why turn in a stream of water upon this parched ground, let there be springs in this thirsty place, let *water break out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert*, as Isa. xxxv. 6. and how will all things be changed? Those things that hung their heads, and had no beauty, will flourish again; and the things that are ready to die will be revived. Why in this condition *Jesus* Christ will be water, and that in abundance, rivers of water, that there shall be no want. He will by his spirit give supplies of grace to make the soul fruitful; he will give in consolation to make it joyful.

[4.] There is *weariness*, and in respect hereof, Christ is said to be *the shadow of a great rock*. Weariness of travel and labour through heat and drought, is insupportable. He that is to travel in a thirsty land, dry and hungry, the sun beating on his head, will be ready with *Jonah* in such a condition to wish he were dead, to be freed of his misery. Oh, how welcome will *the shadow of a great rock* be to such a poor creature? If *Jonah* rejoiced in *the shade of a gourd*; how much better is *the shadow of a great rock*? Many a poor soul exercised with temptations, hindered in duties, scorched with a sense of sin, is weary in his journeying towards *Canaan*, in his course of obedience; and thinks with himself, it were better for him even to die, than to live, having no hopes to come to his journey's end. Let now this poor soul lie down and repose himself a little under the shadow and safeguarding protection of this rock of ages, the Lord *Jesus* Christ, how will his strength and resolution come to him again?

Thus, I say, is Christ in the promises peculiarly suited to all the several distresses, that we may at any time fall into. I might multiply instances to this purpose; but this one may suffice to make good the consideration proposed, for the encouraging of us to believe, from the suiting of the grace in the promises to all our wants.

Two things then may hence be deducted.

1.) The willingness of God that we should be established in believing. To what end should the Lord thus obviate all objections that can possibly arise in a misgiving heart, and accommodate grace in Christ to all perplexities and troubles we at any time lie under, were he not willing we should lay hold on that grace, own it, accept it, and give him the praise of it. If I should go to a poor man, and tell him thou art poor, but see here are riches; thou art naked, but here is clothing; thou art hungry and thirsty, here is food and refreshment; thou art wounded, but I have the most precious balm in the world: if I have no intent to have him

him partake of these riches, food, rayment, medicine; do not I egregiously mock and deride the man's misery and sorrow? will a wife or good man do thus? Though many will deafen their ears to the cry of the poor; yet who almost is so desperately wicked, as to delight himself in sporting at their misery, and increasing their sorrow? And shall we think that the God of heaven, *the Father of mercy, and God of all consolation*, who is all goodness, sweetness, and truth (as hath been declared,) when he doth so suit and temper his fulness to our wants, and suits his grace in Christ to all our fears and troubles for their removal, doth it to encrease our misery, and mock our calamity? I speak of the heirs of promise, to whom they are made and do belong. Is it not time for you to leave disputing, and questioning the sincerity and faithfulness of God in all these engagements? What farther, what greater security can we expect or desire? So that,

2.) All unbelief must needs be at length totally resolved into the stubbornness of the will. *You will not come unto me*, saith our Saviour, *that you may have life*. When all a man's objections are prevented, and answered; when all his wants are suited; when a ground is laid, that all his fears may be removed, and yet he keeps off, and closes not; what can it be, but a mere perverseness of will, that rules him? Doth not such an one say: Let the Lord do what he will, say what he can, though my mouth be stopped, that I have nothing wherewith to wrangle or contend any more, yet I will not believe? Let this then be another motive, or encouragement, which, added to what was spoken before concerning God, even the Father, and the Lord *Jesus Christ*, is all I shall insist upon.

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## \* S E R M O N XXXVI.

The Branch of the Lord the Beauty of *Sion*: Or,  
The glory of the Church in its relation unto Christ:

Opened in two Sermons, one preached at *Berwick*, the other at  
*Edinburgh*.

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To his Excellency the Lord General *Cromwell*, &c.

My Lord,

I was with thoughts of peace that I embraced my call to this place, in time of war. As all peace that is from God is precious to my spirit, so incomparably that between the Father and his elect, which is established, and carried on in the blood and grace of *Jesus Christ*. The ministerial dispensation of this peace being through free grace committed even unto me also, I desire that in every place my whole may be, to declare it to men of God's good pleasure. That this was my chief design, in answer to the call of God upon me, even to pour out a saviour of the Gospel up-

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These two Sermons not being divided in the first edition, we were obliged to print them together as one continued discourse.



on the sons of peace in this place, I hope is manifest to the consciences of all, with whom (since my coming hither) in the work of the ministry I have had to do. The enmity between God and us began on our part; the peace which he hath made, begins and ends with himself. This is the way of God with sinners, when he might justly continue their enemy, and fight against them to their eternal ruine, he draws forth love, and beseeches them to be reconciled, who have done the wrong, and them to accept of peace, who cannot abide the battel. Certainly the bearing forth of this message, which is so *worthy of all acceptation*, and ought to be so welcome, cannot but have sweetness enough to season all the pressures and temptations wherewith it is sometimes attended. This hath been my desire to pursue, and that with the weapons which are not carnal. And though some may be so seasoned with the leaven of contention about carnal things, or at best the *tithing of mint and cummin*, as to disrelish the weightier things of the Gospel, yet the great owner of the vineyard hath not left me without a comfortable assurance that even *this labour in the Lord hath not been in vain*.

The following *sermons*, which I desire to present unto your *Excellency*, were preached one at *Berwick* upon your first advance into *Scotland*, the other at *Edinburgh*. My willingness to serve the inheritance of Christ here, even in my absence, caused me to close with the desires that were held out to this purpose. And I do present them to your *Excellency*, not only because the rise of my call to this service under God was from you; but also because in the carrying of it on, I have received from you in the weaknesses and temptations wherewith I am encompassed, that daily spiritual refreshment and support, by inquiry into, and discovery of the deep and hidden dispensations of God towards his secret ones, which my spirit is taught to value. The carrying on of the interest of the Lord Jesus amongst his saints, in all his ways, which are truth and righteousness, the matter pointed at in this discourse, being the aim of your spirit in your great undertakings, it bears another respect unto you. I am not unacquainted with its meanness, yea its coming short in respect of use and fruit, of what the Lord hath since and by others drawn forth, but such as it is, having by providence stepped first into the world, I wholly commend it to him for an incense, who graciously *supplied the seed to the sower*; beseeching him that we may have *joy unspeakable and glorious*, in the acceptance of that peace, which he gives us in the Son of his love, whilst the peace, whose desire in the midst of war you continually bear forth to him, and to others, is by them rejected to their hurt.

Edinb. Nov. 26.

1650.

Your EXCELLENCY'S

most humble servant in our dearest Lord,

Y y y y

J. OWEN.



## ISAIAH lvi. 7.

---For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.



FROM verse 3. of this Chapter, to ver. 8. you have promises and predictions of calling in Gentiles and strangers to the Church of God, notwithstanding any objections or hindrances laid in their way, by ceremonial and typical constitutions, they being all to be removed in the cross of Christ, *Ephes. ii. 13, 14, 15, 16. Col. ii. 14.* making way for the accomplishment of that signal promise which is given in the second Chapter of this prophecy, ver. 2, 3. *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it: And many people shall go, and say, Come ye, let us go up, &c.*

The words of ver. 7. are a recapitulation of the whole, holding out summarily the calling of the Gentiles to the *holy mount*, or spiritual Church of Christ. Where also you have a description of the services performed by them upon their coming: *Their burnt-offerings and sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar:* answerable to that eminent prediction of the solemn worship of the called Gentiles, *Mal. i. 11. For from the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a peace offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.* The spiritual services of the saints of the Gentiles are in each place set forth by those ceremonial ordinances of incense, altar, and sacrifice, as were then most acceptable from the Lord's own appointment.

Now this whole promise is once again streightned, without loss of life or beauty, and comprized in the words of the text. That which before he termed *sacrifice and burnt-offerings*; here he calleth *Prayer*: and those who before were *the sons of the stranger*; are here *all people*, some, many of all sorts, the whole world, all men, without distinction, the partition wall being broken down.

The thing here spoken of is God's house, described

*First*, By its appropriation unto him, it is his peculiar, *My house*.

*Secondly*, By its extent of receipt in respect of others, it is *for all people*.

*Thirdly*, By the employment of its inhabitants, that is prayer, it *shall be called an house of prayer*.

*House*, here may be taken two ways:

1. Properly, as it was in the type for the material temple at *Hierusalem*; whereunto these words are applied by our Saviour, *Matth. xxi.* But that is no farther concerned herein, but as the spiritual holiness of the antitype could not be represented without a ceremonial holiness of the type.

2. Spiritually, for the Church of Christ to be gathered to him out of all nations: the house wherein *juge sacrificium, a continual spiritual sacrifice* is to be offered to him: this is peculiarly intended. So then observe:

- I. Christ's Church of saints, of believers, is God's house.
- II. The Church of Christ under the Gospel is to be gathered out of all nations.
- III. There are established ordinances, and appointed worship for the Church of Christ under the Gospel.

It is the first that I shall speak unto.

I. Christ's Church of saints, of believers, is God's house.

That his Church is of saints, and believers, will appear in the issue.

By the Church of Christ I understand, *primarily* the whole multitude of them, who antecedently are chosen of his Father, and given unto him; consequently are redeemed, called, and justified in his blood: the Church which he loved, and gave himself



himself for it, *that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it unto himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish*, Ephes. v. 25, 26. And *secondarily* also, every holy assembly of mount Sion, whereunto the Lord Christ is made *beauty and glory*: every particular Church of his saints, inasmuch as they partake of the nature of the whole, *being redeemed by his blood*, Acts xx. 28.

That this Church belongs unto God, I shall only leave evidenced under the claim whereby he here appropriates it to himself, he calls it his: *My house*.

That it is his house, I shall farther demonstrate. Three things are required to the making of an house.

1. A foundation.
2. Materials for a superstruction.
3. An orderly framing of both into an useful building.

And all these concur to the Church of Christ.

1. It hath a foundation: *I have laid the foundation*, saith Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 10. and *other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*, ver. 11. That which Paul laid ministerially, God himself laid primarily and efficiently. Thus saith the Lord God, *Behold I lay in Sion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation*, Isa. xxviii. 16. Now this foundation is no other but the rock upon which the Church is built, Matth. xvi. 18. which makes it impregnable to the *gates of hell*, communicating strength and permanency continually to every part of the building.

2. A foundation only will not make a house, there must also be materials for a superstruction. Those you have, 1 Pet. ii. 5. *You are* (saith he) *lively stones*. All God's elect are stones, in due time to be hewed, and fitted for this building.

3. Materials themselves will not serve: they must be fitly framed, and wisely disposed, or they will be an heap, not an house. This then is not wanting. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the Prophets and the Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: In whom the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord: In whom also ye are builded together, for an habitation to God by the spirit*, Ephes. ii. 20, 21, 22. There is much spiritual and heavenly architecture in these three verses. I shall only touch on some particulars.

(1.) The foundation of this house, this temple, is laid, and that is Jesus Christ: *other foundation can no man lay*. He is here called, the chief corner stone, and, the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles. It is not, which they were, but which they laid. It is *genitivus efficientis*, not *materiae*, that expression holds out, the *persons working*, not the *thing wrought*.

(2.) The materials of this building, elect, believers, said in the former verse, to be *fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*; they alone are built on Christ, and thereby have union with him: not one dead rotten stone in all this building, as shall be declared.

(3.) The architects or builders are of two sorts:

[1.] Principal, the spirit, we are *framed to an habitation for God by the spirit*: he is the principal workman in this fabrick, without him is not one stone laid therein.

[2.] Secondary and instrumental, the Prophets and Apostles. And this they were two ways:

1.) Personally, in their several generations: this was their work, their labour, to lay the foundation, and carry on the building of this house.

2.) Doctrinally, so they labour in it to this very day: their doctrine in the Scripture holds out the only foundation, and the only way of building thereon.

(4.) The manner of the building, it is *fitly framed together*, συναρμολογημένη, closely jointed and knit in together, sweetly closed together with Christ, the head, from which all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God, Col. ii. 19.

(5.) What kind of a house it is. It receiveth here a twofold title, *an holy temple*, and *an habitation*, or tabernacle; because of its allusion to both those holy places of the worship of God, fulfilling the types of them both. Hence it is most evident that



that this Church of Christ is a house, and being appropriated unto God, God's house. To make this the more evident, I shall do these two things:

[1.] Shew you what are the chief properties of this house.

[2.] Declare what is the relation wherein Jesus Christ stands to this house, having called it all along the Church of Christ.

[1.] For the properties, or chief qualities of this house, they are three: 1.) It is a living house. 2.) It is strong. 3.) It is glorious.

1.) It is a living house: *Unto whom coming as unto a living stone, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house*, 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. Christ, the foundation, is a living stone, and they that are built upon him are living stones. Hence they are said to *grow together* into an house. Growth is a sign of life, growing from an inward principle. Such as the growth of any thing is, such is its life. The growth of this house is spiritual, so therefore also is its life; it lives with a spiritual life, a life whose fulness is in its foundation. He hath *life in himself*, John v. 26. and they from him: *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live*, Gal. ii. 22. Yea, it is himself in them: *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*. It is true, those stones are dead in the rock, as well as others: *by nature children of wrath as well as they*, Ephes. ii. 3. *being dead in trespasses and sins*, ver. 1. He who hews them out, gives them life: *he quickens them when dead in trespasses and sin*. There is not one rotten, dead stone in all this building. However some such may, by the advantage of their outward appearance, croud in, yet they are not of the house itself.

2.) It is a strong house: *The gates of hell cannot prevail against it*, Mat. i. 6, 18. *Though the rain descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow upon this house; yet it will not fall, because it is founded on a rock*, Matth. vii. 25. We were all once an house built upon Adam; and when the wind came, and beat upon us, we fell, *and the fall of that house was very great*. He in his best estate was found to be but sand; now we are built upon a rock, that will abide all trials: the waves may make a noise, and dash themselves against him, but it will be to their own ruin.

But you will say: May not weak and inconsistent materials be built upon a rock, which yet may have never the more strength for their firm foundation?

It is not so here, for the whole building is framed together in the foundation, Ephes. ii. 22. not only on it, but also in it, and so not to be prevailed against, unless the rock itself be overthrown. And it is a living rock, that this house is built on, a rock continually communicating strength unto every stone in the building, that it may be enabled to abide in him. I should proceed too far, should I go to declare the mighty defence and fortification of this house: what hath been spoken from the foundation, is enough to demonstrate it to be a strong house.

3.) It is a glorious house, and that in a threefold respect.

(1.) It is glorious in respect of inward glory, brought unto it of God in the face of Jesus Christ, being beautiful through the comeliness that he puts upon it. Hence Christ speaking of it, says: *How fair art thou, O love, for delights!* Cant. vii. 6. and, *thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee*, chap. iv. 7. And how, I pray, comes that about? Why Christ washeth it in his own blood, that it might be wholly a glorious Church, Ephes. v. 26, 27. And farther, he being the branch of the Lord, and fruit of the earth, is made beauty and glory, excellency and comeliness thereunto, Psal. iv. 2.

It hath the beauty and glory of justification, which doth not only take away all filthy garments, causing iniquity to pass away, but also gives fair change of raiment, Zech. iii. 4, 5. even the garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness, Isa. lxi. 10. And then it hath the glory and beauty of sanctification, whence the King's daughter is all glorious within, Psal. xlv. 13. The comeliness and beauty that is in a sanctified soul, is above all the glory of the world. This house is all overlaid with gold within: Christ is unto it, a head of gold, Cant. v. 11. His house is not like Nebuchadnezzar's image, that the head should be of gold, and the members some of them of clay; they all partake of his nature, and are very glorious therein.

(2. In respect of its outward structure, which it eminently hath in all the peculiar assemblies thereof. *O thou afflicted, and tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires.*

*I will*



*I will make thy windows of agats and carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones, Isa. liv. 11, 12. So also where it is called the new Hierusalem (a City from its laws and policy) this City is said to be of pure gold (not dross and mire) the building of the wall of Jasper, and the foundation of the wall garnished with all manner of precious stones, Rev. xxi. 18, 19. This is that which the Psalmist calls the beauty of holiness, Psal. cx. 3. The glory of the ordinances of the Gospel in their vigour and purity. There is nothing so glorious, as our King on his throne, Christ in his court, this house reigning in the administration of his ordinances: Then all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made him glad. Kings daughters are among his honourable women: upon his right hand doth stand the queen in gold of ophir, Psal. xlv. 8, 9. His goings are seen, the goings of our God and King in the sanctuary, Psal. lxxviii. 24, 25, &c. The Apostle exalteth the glory of Gospel administrations exceedingly above the old tabernacle and temple worship, which yet was exceeding pompous and glorious. If, saith he, the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth; for if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Let men think as meanly as they please of the spiritual service of God amongst his people, all glory that ever yet appeared in the world was but a bubble to it, all that God ever instituted before came exceeding short of it: he delights in it, who beholds the proud afar off.*

(3. It is glorious in respect of the exaltation it hath above, and triumph over all its opposers. To see a house, a palace, hanged round about with ensigns, spoils, and banners taken from the enemy that have come against it, is a glorious thing: thus is this house of God decked. *Kings of armies did flee a pace, and she that tarried at home divided the spoil, Psal. lxxviii. 12. She that tarries at home, the mother of the family, the Church of God, she hath all the spoils.* The Lord hath affirmed, that not only every one that opposeth, but all that do not serve this house, shall be utterly destroyed, *Isa. lx. 12.* There you have the spoil of *Pharaoh*, and all his host, gathered on the shore of the Red sea, and dedicated in this house, *Exod. xv.* There you have the robes of *Nebuchadnezzar* reserved, when himself was turned into a beast, *Dan. iv.* There you have the imperial ornaments of *Dioclesian*, and his companion, casting aside their dominion for very madness, that they could not prevail against this house. There is the blood of *Julian* kept for a monument of vengeance against apostates. There you have the rochets of the prelates of this land, hung up of late with other garments of their adherents rolled in blood: there is a place reserved for the remaining spoils of the great whore, when she shall be burned, and made naked, and desolate, *Rev. xi.* Never any rose, or shall arise against this house, and go forth unto final prosperity. Let the men of the world take heed, how they burthen themselves with the foundation stone of this house; it will assuredly break them all in pieces.

Thus have I given you a glimpse of this house, with the chief properties of it, which as God assumes as his own, so also peculiarly it belongs unto the Lord Christ; yea what relation it stands in unto him, or rather he unto it, is the main thing I intend.

[2.] *Jesus Christ* stands in a twofold relation unto this house.

1.) In respect of its fabrick and building.

2.) In respect of its state and condition.

1.) In the first regard Christ relates to this house in a four fold respect. As, (1. Its foundation. (2. Its ark. (3. Its altar. (4. Its candlestick.

I shall pass through these, God assisting, in order, and begin with what was first laid down, his relation to this house. As,

(1. The foundation of it: This was in part declared before. He is the stone which the builders rejected, but made of the Lord the head of the corner, Psal. cxviii. 22. He is the lowest in the bottom to bear up the weight of the building,

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ing, and the highest in the corner to couple the whole together. *Other foundation can no man lay, but that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. iii. 10. He is the *rock*, on which he builds his *Church*, Matth. xvi. 18.

Now there are three things required to a foundation, all which are eminently seen in the Lord Christ, in reference to this house.

1.] That it be first laid in the building. It were a course exceeding preposterous, first to build a house, and then to lay the foundation. Jesus Christ is the first that is laid in this holy fabrick, and that in a fourfold respect:

[1. He is the first in respect of God's eternal purpose. The Lord purposed that *he should have the preheminance* in this as well as in all other things, Col. i. 15. He is in that respect *the first born among many brethren*, Rom. viii. 29. the residue of this house, being predestinated to be made conformable unto him. He is before all things: by him *all things* (that is, all spiritual things, all the things of this house) *consist*: he is the head of the body, the Church. This I mean, God purposed that Christ should be the bottom and foundation of this whole building, that it should be all laid on him. I do not mean, that God first intended Christ for a foundation, and then his elect for building (the order of intention and execution is, as to first and last, inverted by all Agents,) but this I say, God purposing to build his elect into an holy Temple, purposed that Jesus Christ should be the foundation,

[2. In respect of outward manifestation. God first manifests and declares him, before he laid one stone in this building. Gen. iii. 15. *The seed* (saith he) *of the woman shall break the serpents head*: in that was laid the first stone of this building: then was the *Lamb slain* ἀπὸ καλαβόνης κόσμου, Rev. xiii. 8. presently *after the foundation of the world*: and thence is *grace in him said to be given* to the elect, *πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων*, Titus i. 2. *many ages ago*.

[3. Because in order of nature Christ must be first laid in the heart of every individual stone, before they are laid up in this building. If Christ be not in men, they are ἀδόκιμοι, 2 Cor. xv. 1. altogether *useless* for this building; try them never so often, they must at last be rejected, and laid aside.

[4. In respect of every particular assembly, and little sanctuary of mount *Sion*. If he be not first laid in the midst of such assemblies, they will prove to be pinacles of *Babel*, not towers of *Sion*. This therefore was the way of the Saints of old, *first to give up themselves to the Lord Christ, and then to one another, by the will of God*, 2 Cor. viii. 5.

In these respects Christ, the foundation, is first laid in this spiritual building, which is the first property of a foundation.

2.] A foundation must be hidden, and out of sight, unto all those that outwardly look upon the house. They cannot perceive it, though every part of the house doth rest upon it. And this hath occasioned many mistakes in the world. An unwise man coming to a great house, seeing the anticks and pictures stand crouching under the windows and sides of the house, may haply think, that they bear up the weight of the house, when indeed they are for the most part pargeted posts; they bear not the house, the house bears them. By their bowing, and outward appearance, the man thinks the burden is on them, and supposes that it would be an easy thing, at any time, by taking them away, to demolish the house itself. But when he sets himself to work, he finds these things of no value, there is a foundation in the bottom, which bears up the whole, that he thought not of: against that he may waste himself, until he be broken in pieces. Men looking upon the Church, do find that it is a fair fabrick indeed, but cannot imagine how it should stand. A few supporters it seemeth to have in the world, like crouching anticks under the windows, that make some shew of underpropping it: here you have a magistrate, there an army, or so. Think the men of the world, can we but remove these props, the whole would quickly topple to the ground. Yea so foolish have I been my self; and so void of understanding before the Lord, as to take a view of some goodly appearing props of this building, and to think, how shall the house be preserved if these should be removed: they looked unto me like the mariners in *Paul's ship*, without whose abode therein they could not be saved: when lo, suddenly some have been manifested to be pargeted posts, and the very best to be held up by the house, and not to hold it up. On this account the men of the world think it no great matter to demolish the spiritual Church of Christ to the



ground: they encourage one another to the work, never thinking of the foundation, that lies hidden, against which they dash themselves all to pieces. I say then, Christ, as the foundation of this house, is hidden to the men of the world, they see it not, they believe it not; there is nothing more remote from their apprehension than that Christ should be at the bottom of them and their ways, whom they so much despise.

3.] The foundation is that which bears up the whole weight of the building. What part of the house soever, is not directly poised upon it, hath no strength at all. Take a goodly stone, hew it, square it, make it every way fit for your fabrick, so that it may seem to be the best of all your materials; yet if you do not lay it upon the foundation, answerable to that, which may give it a solid basis, and bear up the weight and poise thereof, it will be useless, cumbersome, and quickly fall to the ground.

Let a man be hewed and squared by the word and ordinances into outward conformity, never so exactly, that he seems one of the most beautiful saints in the world; yet if he be not laid rightly by faith upon the foundation, to derive from thence strength, supportment, and vigour, he will quickly fall to the ground. What then will become of their building, who heap up all sorts of rubbish to make an house for the Lord?

(2. Christ is the ark of this house. The ark in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple, was the most holy thing in the most holy place. There was nothing in it but the two tables of stone written with the finger of God: before it was Aaron's rod that budded, with a pot full of manna: over it was the propitiatory, or mercy seat, being a plate of gold, as long, and as broad as the ark, covering it, being shadowed with the cherubims of glory. Now all this glorious fabrick did signify, that unless the law with its condemning power were hid in the ark, and covered with the mercy seat, no person could stand before the Lord. Besides, the law was the old covenant of works, and being renewed unto them chiefly to be subservient to the Gospel, and partly with its appurtenances and carnal administration to be the tenor of the *Israelites* holding the land of *Canaan*, and this being in the ark, it was said to contain the covenant, and is frequently called the ark of the covenant. *Jesus* Christ is the ark of this spiritual house. When the temple was opened in heaven, there was seen in the temple the ark of God's testament, Rev. xi. 10. *Jesus* Christ made conspicuous to all, who lay much hid under the Old Testament, Rom. iii. 25. God is said to set forth Christ to be *ἱλαστήριον*, a propitiation, or mercy seat; for by that very term is the mercy seat expressed, Heb. ix. 5. He is then the ark, and the mercy seat covering it. He then doth these two things:

1.] In behalf of this house, and every stone thereof, he hides the law with its condemning power, that nothing from thence shall be laid to their charge. If a man have a suit to be tried in any court, and a powerful friend engage himself, that the only evidence which is against him shall not be produced, will it not give him encouragement to proceed? In that great and tremendous trial, which is to be above, there is but one principal evidence against us, which gives life to all others, which if it be removed all the rest must fail: this is the law. Christ, as the ark and mercy seat, hides this law, it shall not (I speak in respect to this house) be produced at the day of trial. Will not this be a great encouragement to them to appear at the throne of God? Christ hides the law as being *the end* of it, Rom. x. 4. that the *righteousness thereof might be fulfilled in us*, Rom. viii. 4. He hath so far answered all that the law required, that none from thence can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Let not poor sinners fear, it will not be with them, as with *Uzzah*: he touched the ark, and died: touch this ark, and live for ever. And,

2.] He is the ark of this house, as containing in himself the new covenant; it is made with him originally, established in him irreversibly, made out through him in all the grace of it faithfully.

3. He is the altar of this house. There were two altars in the old tabernacle, and temple: an altar for sacrifice, and an altar for incense, *Exod.* xxix. and xxx. The first was the great brazen altar, that stood without the holy place, whereon the burnt-offerings, and all sacrifices of blood for remission were offered. The other  
 less,



less, made of *shittim wood*, all overlaid with pure gold, and a crown of beaten gold upon it, on which they were to burn pure incense unto the Lord always. And they were both most holy, sanctifying the gifts with legal sanctification that were offered on them, *Matth. xxiii. 19.* Now both these doth our Saviour supply in this house. He is the great altar of sacrifice, the altar of offerings for expiation and atonement. *We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat, who serve at the tabernacle, Heb. xiii. 10.* that is even he, who *sanctified the people with his own blood, and suffered without the gate, ver. 11.* The good will and soul of Christ offering up himself, through the eternal spirit, a pure oblation and sacrifice, by one offering to perfect for ever them that are sanctified, is all our altar. He is also the golden altar of incense. Incense is prayer, *Psal. cxli. 2. Let my prayer come before thee as incense.* Jesus Christ is the golden altar whereon that incense is offered, *Rev. viii. 3, 4.* even that altar which is always before God, *Rev. ix. 13.* As by being the former he makes our persons accepted, so by the latter he makes our duties accepted. And all the living stones of this house are priests to offer sacrifice on these altars, by him, as priests, they have approximation to the holy place, there they have a share and participation in all the sacrifices that are offered upon or by him.

(4. He is the candlestick of this house. The making, fashioning, and use of the candlestick, in the holy place of the tabernacle, you have, *Exod. xxv. 31, &c.* It was one of the most glorious utensils of that frame, made of pure and beaten gold, with much variety of works, knops, flowers, and lamps. The use of it was, to bear out light for all the worship of God in that most holy place. The tabernacle was made close, without any window. It was not to receive light from without, it had all its own light from within. It is true, this candlestick with its seven lamps, did secondarily represent the Churches of Christ, which hold out his light among themselves, and unto others. *Rev. i. 20. The seven candlesticks thou sawest are the seven Churches.* Therefore Solomon made *ten candlesticks of pure gold, 1 Kings vii. 49.* to set out yet farther the increase and multiplying of the Churches of God. Upon this account also the *two witnesses* are said to be *two candlesticks, Rev. xi. 4.* and *the two anointed ones, that stand before the God of the whole earth, Zech. iv. 3.* whence that in the *Revelation* is taken. There is mention indeed of two anointed ones, but of one candlestick, the Holy Ghost plainly intimating, that though the Churches and witnesses of Christ are also candlesticks in a second sense, yet there is one eminent candlestick, which hath light originally in itself, which also it communicates unto all others. And this is that which is mentioned in *Zech. iv.* which hath the *two olive trees*, or the two anointed Churches of *Jews and Gentiles* standing by it, receiving light from it, to communicate to others: they empty the golden oil out of themselves, which they receive from the candlestick. For this candlestick hath *seven lamps, ver. 2.* which lamps, that burn before the throne, are the *seven spirits of God, Rev. iv. 5.* seven spirits, that is, the perfection and completeness of the spirit of God, in all his graces and operations. Now who hath these seven spirits? Even he *who received not the spirit by measure, John iii. 34.* being the *stone upon which are the seven eyes, Zech. iii. 9.* He alone then is this candlestick, and all the light which this house hath, it is from him.

There are two ways whereby Jesus Christ makes out light to this house. 1.] By way of doctrinal revelation. 2.] Of real communication.

1.] He alone discovers light to all the stones of this building. *No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, John i. 10.* No saving discovery of God, of his nature, his will, his love, but what is by Christ. The moon and stars give light, but it is only what they receive from the sun. The Prophets and Apostles held out light, but it was all received from him. *They spake by the spirit of Christ that was in them. I have received of the Lord that which I have delivered unto you, 1 Cor. xi. 23.* The same Apostle curses every one that shall bring in any other light into this house, be they angels, or men, *Gal. i. 8, 9.* Christ alone fully knows the mind of God, as being always in the *bosom of his Father, John i. 18.* Yea, he knows it to the uttermost, being *one with his Father, John x. 30.* And he is willing to reveal it, for even *for this end came he into the world, that he might bear witness to the truth.* And he had ability enough to do it, for *in him were hid all the treasures*



of wisdom and knowledge, Col. ii. 3. He alone is the author of all light to this his holy habitation. Many attempts have been to set up light in this house, and not from Christ. Some would kindle their traditions for the doctrine of this house, some their prudentials for the government of it, some their ceremonials for the worship of it: all candles in the sun. Shall men think to compass themselves with sparks, and walk in the light of the fire which themselves have kindled, in the face of the sun of righteousness? Shall not such men lie down in sorrow? Beloved, take heed of such *ignes fatui*, foolish, misleading fires.

2.] By way of real communication, *He is the true light which lightneth every man*, John i. 9. Every one that hath any spiritual light really communicated to him, hath it from Christ. It is part of his work to *recover sight to the blind*, Luke iv. 18. And therefore he adviseth the Church of *Laodicea* to come to him for eye salve, that she might see, *Rev. iii. 18*. At his coming *Sion shines forth*, Isa. lx. 1. because his *light ariseth upon her*, ver. 2. The former doctrinal teaching of itself will not suffice: that *light may shine in darkness, and the darkness not comprehend it*, John i. 5. All the light the sun can give, will not make a blind man see: there must be a visive faculty within, as well as light without. The stones of this building are by nature all blind, yea, darkned, yea, darkness itself. If the Lord Christ do not by the mighty efficacy of his spirit create a visive power within them, as well as reveal the will of his Father to them, they will never spiritually discern the things of God. *The natural man discerneth not the things of God, nor indeed can do*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. It is true, men by the help of common gifts, with the use of the former doctrinal revelation, may attain to such a knowledge of the mind of God, as may in a sense be called illumination, *Heb. vi. 4*. Far may they go, much may they do, by this light: they may teach others, and be cast away themselves: they may dispute for truth, yea, die for truth, and all this while have but the first, common anointing, see nothing clearly, but men walking like trees. A spiritual insight into the mind of God, is not to be obtained without an almighty act of the spirit of Christ, creating a new power of life and light upon the soul. Some indeed think that they have this seeing power in themselves. Do but shew them outwardly what is to be seen, and let them alone for the discerning of it. Well then, let them alone, if ever they are stones of this living house, I am deceived. Thou that art so, know whence is all thy light; and if thou art any thing in the dark, draw nigh to the candlestick, from whence all light is. Thence must thy light come, yea, and thence it shall come, the secrets of the Lord shall make their abode with thee.

And this is the fourfold relation wherein the Lord Christ stands unto this house, as it is a spiritual building.

2.) In respect of state and condition, *Jesus Christ* stands in a fivefold relation to this house, *viz.* (1. As the owner. (2. The builder. (3. The watchman, or keeper. (4. The inhabiter. (5. The avenger: each of which I shall unfold in order.

(1. He is the owner of it. He calls it *his*: *Upon this rock will I build my Church*, Matth. xvi. 18. *Moses was faithful in all his house, as a servant: but Christ, as a Son over his own house, whose house are we*, Heb. iii. 4, 5. And that you may see that he doth not own it as his, without good right and title, know that in the great oeconomy of grace *Jesus Christ* hath a threefold right and title to this house.

1.] Of inheritance. He is by his Father *appointed heir of all things*, Heb. i. 3. By inheritance he obtains this excellent name, to be Lord of this house. God sends him to the vineyard as the heir, after his servants were refused. And he hath an engagement from his Father, that he shall enjoy his whole inheritance upon demand, *Psal. ii. 8*. For the Father appointed, *in the fulness of time, to gather together all these things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, in him*, Ephes. i. 10. So that as *Christ is the first begotten of the Father*, Heb. i. 6. and *the first born of every creature*, Col. i. 15. the right of heirship is his. But this will not do: for,

2.] When he should come to take possession of this house, he finds that it is mortgaged, and that a great debt lies upon it, which he must pay to the uttermost farthing, if ever he intend to have it. To the former title there must also be added a right of purchase. He must purchase this house, and pay a great price for it.



And what is this price? what is required of him? No less than his *dearest blood*, Acts xx. 28. Yea, he must make his soul an offering for sin, and charge himself with the whole debt; all the curse and punishment which this house had in part actually contracted upon itself, and wholly deserved. He must put his shoulders under the burden due to it, and his back to the stripes prepared for it. A hard task! But *Jesus Christ* being the heir, the right of redemption belonged unto him. It was not for his honour that it should lie unredeemed. Full well he knew that if he did it not, the whole creation was too beggarly to make this purchase. 'Tis true, that nature of ours, which he assumed to pay that by, which he never took, was startled for a while, and would have deprecated this grievous price, crying out, *If it be possible let this cup pass from me*: but he recollects himself, and says, *I am content to do thy will, O God*: and so, through the eternal spirit, he offered himself up unto God for a ransom. He likes the house, and will have it to dwell in, whatever it cost him. *Here*, saith he, *shall be my habitation, and my dwelling for ever*, Psal. cxxxiii. *Know you not*, saith the Apostle, *that you are the temple of the spirit of Christ*? Well, and how come we so to be? *You are bought with a price*, 2 Cor. vi. 19. They who affirm that he also purchased the unclean sties of the Devil, wot not what they say.

3.] Unto purchase he must also add conquest. An unjust usurper had taken possession of this house, and kept it in bondage: Satan had seized on it, and brought it, through the wrath of God, under his power. He then must be conquered, that the Lord Christ may have compleat possession of his own house. *For this purpose then was the Son of God made manifest, that he might destroy the works of the Devil*, 1 John iii. 8. And how doth he do it? He overpowers him, and destroys him, in that *through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil*, Heb. ii. 14. And he spoiled him having overcome him, *He bound the strong man, and then spoiled his goods*, Matth. xii. 27. All that darkness, unbelief, sin, and hardness, that he had stuffed this house withal, Christ spoils and scatters them all away. And to make his conquest compleat, he triumphs over his enemy, and like a mighty conqueror makes an open shew of him to his everlasting shame, Col. ii. 15. *Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross*: and by this means strengthens his title to his inheritance.

I might also farther insist on the donation of his Father, and the actual possession he takes of it by his spirit; but these are sufficient to prove this house to be Christ's. I shall take some *observations* hence.

*Observation 1.* Is this the house of Christ? is he the owner of it? Let men take heed how they spoil it for themselves. The *Psalmist* makes this a great argument in his pleading against opposers, that they came *into the Lord's inheritance*, Psal. lxxix. 1. The title of Christ's purchase was not then so clearly known, as that of his inheritance; and therefore they of old pleaded chiefly by that title. Now he hath proclaimed to all his other titles also, the whole right he has to this house, to his saints. Who then shall meddle with it, and go free? Amongst men every one with all his might will defend his own possession: and shall we think that the Lord Christ will suffer his to be spoiled at an easy rate? Shall not men pay dear for their encroachment? How hath he in our days frustrated all attempts for the persecution of his? *Touch not*, saith he, *mine anointed*. Men may upon various pretences claim this privilege to such a land, nation, or faction; it will in the end appear to be theirs, and only theirs, who are living stones of this house. Dogs may scramble for their bread, but shall not enjoy it. It is Christ in this house that will make every stone of it a burdensome stone. He hath done it, that men may learn *μὴ διαμαχεῖν*. Do not think it will excuse thee to say, thou wast mistaken.

*Observation 2.* Is Christ the owner of this house? Let the order and disposal of it be left to himself. Men are apt to be tampering with his house and household. They will be so kind and careful, as to lay out their wisdom and prudence about it: thus and thus shall it be, these are parts and members of it. Christ is exceeding jealous of his honour in this particular. He cannot bear it, that men pretending to his glory, should think him so wanting in love or wisdom towards his own, as not exactly to dispose of all things that concern the regimen thereof. Men would not be so dealt withal in their own houses, as they deal with Christ in his.



We have all wisdom enough (as we suppose) to order our own houses; only the wisdom and love of the Father leaves his to the discretion of others. These thoughts are not from above.

*Observation 3.* Hath Christ taken his own house to himself upon so many titles? Let not men put those buildings on him, for his, which are not so, which he holds not by these titles. Go to a man that dwells in a stately palace of his own, shew him a hogstie, tell him, This is your house, here you dwell, this is yours: can you put a greater indignity on him? No, says the man, that is not mine, I dwell in yonder sumptuous palace. And shall we deal thus with the Lord *Jesus*? He hath bought and adorned his own house: a glorious house it is. If now men shall hold out to him a stie of swine, a den of unclean beasts, a ruinous heap, whereof the far greatest part are dead stones, and tell him, this is his Church, his house: will it not exceedingly provoke him? will he bear such a reproach? Nay, he will reject such tenders to their ruine.

(2. *Jesus* Christ is the builder of this house: *This man is counted worthy of more honour than Moses, inasmuch as he that buildeth the house hath more honour than the house*, Heb. iii. 3. *I*, saith he, *will build my Church*, Matth. xvi. 18. This is not a fabrick for any workman, but Christ. It is true, there are others employed under him; and some so excellent, that they may be said to be *wise master builders*, 2 Cor. iii. 10. But yet all the efficacy of their labour in this building is not from themselves, but merely from him, by whom they are employed. Except the Lord build this house, they labour in vain, that go about to build it.

Now this house receives a twofold building. 1.] Spiritual, of all the stones thereof into one mystical house. Of this I chiefly treat. 2.] *Ecclesiastical*, of some particular stones into several tabernacles, which are useful partitions in the great mystical house, called assemblies, and dwelling places of mount *Sion*. Both these it hath from Christ alone.

1.] For the first: If all the most skilful workmen in the world should go to the pit of nature, by their own strength, to hew out stones for this building, they will never with all their skill and diligence lay one stone upon it. There is life required to those stones, which none can give but Christ. The Father hath given into his hand alone *to give life eternal to whom he will*, Joh. xvii. 2. He alone can turn stones into children of *Abraham*. To him is committed all dispensation of quickning power. He brings us from the dust of death, and no man hath quickned his own soul. With spiritual power all spiritual life is vested in Christ. If dead stones live, it must be by hearing the voice of the Son of God. Christ's building of his mystical house is his giving life unto dead stones, or rather being life unto them. Of those who will attempt to build themselves, and draw a principle of spiritual life from the broken cisterns of nature, I shall speak afterwards.

2.] For the second, or the communion of living stones one with another, and all with Christ, in the order and worship appointed by the Gospel, so becoming assemblies, and dwelling places of mount *Sion*: this also is of him. This is for his outward solemn worship, and he would never allow, that the will of any creature should be the measure of his honour. He sets up the candlesticks, and holds the stars in his hand. Look to the institution of this building, it is from Christ: look for directions about this building, it is wholly from him: from him, his word, his spirit, is the institution, direction, and perfection of it. From hence now take some *observations*.

*Observation, 1.* Is Christ the builder of this house? Can he alone fit us for this building? Can he alone, and that by his almighty power put life into dead stones, that they may grow up to be a holy and living habitation unto him? What then becomes of that famous workman freewill, and a power of believing in our selves, do not they work effectually in this temple? As it was in *Solomon's* temple, *there was neither axe, nor hammer, nor any tool of iron heard in it, all the while it was in building*; 1 Kings vi. 7. so in this spiritual house, that iron tool of freewill is not once heard, it comes not nigh the work, Christ doth all alone. He gives life to whom he pleases. Shall a dead will be thought to have a quickning, life-giving power in it? Shall a spirit of life be spun out of the bowels of nature? Is it the will of man, or the will of God, that draws men unto Christ? And is it his spirit, or flesh, that unites us to him? Where then is this workman employed, that makes



makes all this noise in the world? Even there, where men cry: *Go to, let us build a city, and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven*, Gen. xi. 4. amongst those who would build a *Babel*, a tower of their own to get to heaven by. The Lord comes down and scatters all their undertakings. This workman never placed stone in the house of Christ. Nay, it is like the foolish woman, that pulls down her house with both her hands: what free grace sets up, that freewill strives to demolish.

*Obfer.* 2. See hence a great mistake of many poor creatures, who would fain be stones in this house. What course take they? They hew and square themselves, strive to cut off this and that rubbish, which (as they suppose) alone hinders them from being fitted to this building. They pare themselves with vows, promises, resolutions, and engagements, beautify themselves with duties and services, and then with many perplexing fears present themselves to the building, never knowing whether they are admitted or no. All this while the great master builder stands by, scarcely dealt withal. What now is the issue of such attempts? What they build one day, falls down in another. When they have oftentimes in their own thoughts brought the building to such a pass, as that they are ready to think it will be well with them, now surely they shall have a share and interest in this living and glorious house; all on a sudden they fall again to the ground, their hopes wither, and they suppose themselves in the world's rubbish again. There is no end of this alternation. Would now this poor soul see where its great defect lies? It hath not applied it self aright to the only builder. Wouldest thou be a stone in this fabrick? Lay thy self before the Lord *Jesus*, say to him, that thou art in thy self altogether unfit for the great building he hath in hand; that thou hast often attempted to put thy self upon it, but all in vain: now, Lord *Jesus*, do thou take me into thine own hand, if thou castest me away, I cannot complain, I must justify thee in all thy ways; but thou callest things that are not, as though they were, thou turnest dead stones into children of *Abraham*: Oh, turn my dead into a living stone! Fear not, he will in no wise cast thee out.

The vanity of men, attempting to mix their power and wisdom in the heaping up tabernacles for Christ, might be hence discovered; but I forbear.

(3. *Jesus* Christ is the great watchman, or keeper of this house. There are indeed other watchmen, and that of God's own appointment, for the use of this house: *Son of man, I have set thee a watchman*, Ezek. ii. 11. *I have set watchmen upon thy wall*, Isa. lxi. 6, 7. which in a special manner are the pastors of the Churches, *they watch*, Heb. xiii. 17. as the priests and Levites heretofore kept the watch of the Lord. It cannot be denied, but that many who have taken upon them to be these watchmen, have watched only for their own advantage, have been very dogs, yea dumb dogs, the very worst of dogs, *Isa.* lxvi. 10. yea they have been, and oftentimes are under various pretences, great *smilers*, and *wounders of the spouse of Christ*, Cant. v. but yet were they never so good, and true to their trusts, they were never able all to watch and keep this house, had it not another watchman: *Except the Lord keep the city, these watchmen watch in vain*, Psal. cxxvii. 1. He that keepeth *Israel*, who doth neither slumber nor sleep, must keep this house, or it will be destroyed. Christ then is that *Holy one*, and that *watcher*, that came down from heaven, and commanded to cut down the tree and the branches, Dan. iv. 13, 14. *Nebuchadnezzar* and his great power, for meddling with this house. Now Christ watcheth his house for two ends.

1.] To see what it wants, 2 Cor. xvi. 9. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro, throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in its behalf. He looks down from heaven to behold them that fear him*, Psal. xiv. He is that *stone*, upon which are *seven eyes*, Zech. iii. 9. a sufficiency in perfection of wisdom, inspection, and government for the good of his house. And those *seven eyes of his run to and fro through the whole earth*, for this very purpose, *Zech.* iv. 10. He takes notice of the state and condition of his people, to eye them in all their distresses, and to give them timely and suitable deliverance. They may call every spring of their refreshment, *Beer-lahai-roi*.

2.] To see that the son of violence draw not nigh unto it; and if he do, to require it at his hands, to make him eat his own flesh, and drink his own blood, that he may learn to devour no more. *Observe* then,

*Observation* 1. Whence it is that this house, which seems so often to be nigh  
I to



to destruction, is yet preserved from ruin. Oftentimes it is brought into a condition, that all that look on say: Now it is gone for ever. But still it recovers, and gets up again. The Lord Christ looks on all the while: he knows how far things may proceed for trial. When it comes to that pass, that if pressures and troubles should continue, the house will be over-born indeed; then he puts in, rebukes the winds and waves, and makes all things still again. Like a father, who looks upon his child in a difficult and dangerous business, knows that he can relieve him when he pleases, but would willingly see him try his strength and cunning, lets him alone, until perhaps the child thinks himself quite lost, and wonders his father doth not help him; but when the condition comes to be such, that without help he will be lost indeed, instantly the father puts in his hand and saves him. So deals the Lord *Jesus* with his house, lets it oftentimes strive and wrestle with great oppositions, to draw out and exercise all the graces thereof; but yet all this while he looketh on, and when danger is nigh indeed, he is not far off.

*Observation 2.* Let all the enemies of the Church know, that there is one, who hath an eye over them in all their counsels and undertakings. Whilst they are digging deep, he looks on, and laughs them to scorn. How perplexed was the king of *Syria*, when he found that the prophet was acquainted with all his designs, and made them known to the king of *Israel*? It cannot but be a matter of perplexity to the enemies of this house, when they shall find, that the great friend and protector thereof is continually present in all their advices. Let them not wonder at their birthless undertakings, the eye of Christ is still upon them.

*Observation 3.* Let the saints see their privilege, whoever they are, in what condition soever, the eye of Christ is upon them. He watches over them for good, and knows their souls in adversity. When no eye sees them, he looks on them, they cannot be cast out of his care, nor hid from his sight. There are many poor souls, who go heavily all the day long, that mourn in their spirits unknown, unregarded, unpitied; the eye of Christ is on them for good continually, they cannot be thrown out of his watchful care.

(4. Christ is the indweller of this house. He hath not built it, and framed it for no use. It is for an habitation for himself. He *hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest, saith he, here will I dwell*, Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14. This house is built up, to be *an habitation unto him*, Ephes. ii. 22. He is the *King of saints*, and this house is his court. It is true for his human nature, *the heavens must receive him, until the time of the restitution of all things*, Acts iv. 27. but yet he dwelleth in this house three ways.

1.] By his spirit. Christ dwells in this house, and every stone of it, by his spirit: *Know you not that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Christ in you*: that is, the spirit of Christ, Christ by his spirit. So the Holy Ghost expounds it, *Rom. viii. 9. If the spirit of God dwell in you*, which, ver. 10. is, *if Christ be in you*. Christ and his Spirit, as to indwelling, are all one; for he dwells in us by his spirit. *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, that is given unto us*, Rom. v. 5. There is not only the love of God, a grace of the spirit shed abroad in us; but there is also the holy Spirit given unto us. This is fully asserted, *Rom. viii. 11. The Spirit of him that raised up Jesus, dwells in you*: as also, 2 Tim. i. 14. *Keep the good thing committed to thee, by the holy Ghost that dwelleth in us*. Hence the Saints are said to be *temples of the holy Ghost*. *Jesus* Christ doth not build temples merely for graces, created graces; he dwells in them himself, he dwells in them by his spirit. And this is a glorious privilege of this house, that *Jesus* Christ in a mystical and wonderful manner should dwell in it, and every stone of it. Hereby all believers come to be not one personal, but one mystical Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 6. However we are distanced, in respect of his humane nature, yet mystically we are one, one body, one mystical Christ, because we have one spirit, dwelling in us and him. If a man were never so tall, so that his head should reach the stars, and his feet stand upon the ground; yet having but one soul, he is but one man still. Though Christ in his humane nature be exceedingly distanced from us; yet there being one and the same spirit in him and us, we are one mystical Christ. Yet observe.



*Observation 1.* Though Christ be united unto the persons of the saints, by the indwelling of the spirit: yet the saints have not that which is called personal union with him, nor with the spirit. Personal union is by a person of the deity, assuming the nature of man into one personality with it self, that having of its own no personal subsistence. Things are here clean otherwise: Christ doth not assume the saints into a personal subsistence with himself, but dwells in their persons by his spirit.

*Observation 2.* That the operations of the indwelling spirit of Christ, and all his manifestations, are voluntary. He worketh as he will, and revealeth what he will, even where he dwells. He doth not work in us naturally, but voluntarily, unto what proportion he pleaseth; therefore though he dwell equally in all saints in respect of truth and reality, yet he doth not in respect of working and efficacy.

2.] By his graces. Christ dwelleth in this house, and in all the stones thereof by his graces. He dwells in our hearts by faith, Ephes. iii. 17. He dwells in us by his word in all wisdom, Col. iii. 16. All the graces we are made partakers of, we receive from his fulness, and by them he inhabits in us. They are indeed the ornaments of the living stones of this house, to make them meet and fit for such an indweller, as the Lord Christ. Christ will not dwell in a soul, whose mind is darkness, his will stubbornness, and his affections carnal and sensual. He puts light, and life, and love upon the soul, that it may be meet for him to dwell in. Christ dwells in all the world by his power and presence, but he dwells only in his saints by his spirit and grace.

3.] By his ordinances. Where two or three of his are assembled together, there is he in the midst of them. The ordinances of Christ are the great ornaments of his kingly court, by them he is glorious in all the assemblies of mount Zion. Some would fain cast out this indwelling of Christ from among his saints: in due time he will thoroughly rebuke them: some again would thrust him out into the world; but he will make men know, that his ordinances are given unto his. It is true, the benefit of some of them extends to the world, but the right and enjoyment of them is the privilege of his saints. Thus Christ dwells in his house. Hence observe,

*Observation 1.* The intimacy of the Lord Jesus with his saints, and the delight he takes in them: he dwelleth with them, he dwelleth in them, he takes them to the nearest union with himself possible: he in them, they in him, that they may be one. He hath made many an admirable change with us. He took our sin, and gives us his righteousness: he took our nature, and gives us his spirit. Neither is it a bare indwelling, he thereby holds with us all acts of the choicest communion. If, saith he, any man hear my voice, and open to me, I will come to him: and what then? I will sup with him, and he with me, Rev. iii. 20.

(1.) I will sup with him: I will delight and satisfy myself with him. Jesus Christ takes abundance of delight and contentment in the hearts of his saints. When they are faithful, when they are fruitful, he is marvelously refreshed with it. Hence is that prayer of the spouse: Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the savour of my spices may flow out: let my beloved come and eat of his spices, Cant. iv. 16. She would have the spices, the graces she hath received, breathed on by a fresh gale of the spirit, that they might yield a sweet savour. And why so? That her beloved may have something for his entertainment, that he may come and sup, and eat of his pleasant fruits. A poor soul, that hath received Christ, hath not any desire so fervent, as that it may have something for the entertainment of him: that he who filled it when it was hungry, may not (as it were) be sent away empty. And the Lord Jesus is exceedingly taken with those refreshments. The King is held in his galleries, Cant. iv. 5. He is detained, yea, bound with delight, he knows not how to pass away. Therefore he rests in his love, Zeph. iii. 17. He is exceedingly satiated in the delight he takes in his saints. Neither is this all, that when Christ comes he will sup with us, though this be a great deal. For what are we, that we should entertain our Lord? But also,

(2.) The saints sup with him: he provides choice refreshments for them also. When Christ comes in unto us, he will entertain a soul bounteously. He provides love for us. When the spirit of Christ is bestowed on us, he sheds abroad the



*love of God in our hearts*, Rom. v. 5. He sheds it abroad, pours it out abundantly. Friends love is a choice dainty: he that knows it not, is a stranger to all spiritual banquets: it is a choice dish in the feast of fat things, that Christ prepareth. He provides *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost* for us, Rom. xiv. 17. that his kingdom, and this kingdom of his, is within us. Of such precious things as these doth Christ provide a supper for them, with whom he dwells. If Christ be in you, more or less, you shall not want this entertainment. We are indeed sometimes like mad guests, that when meat is set on the table, cast it all down, without tasting a morsel. When Christ hath prepared sweet and precious dainties for us, we cast them on the ground; we throw away our peace, our joy, by folly and unbelief: but this makes not the truth of God of none effect.

*Observation 2.* Doth Christ dwell in us by his spirit? Should we not be careful lest we *grieve that spirit* of his? The spirit of Christ is very tender. Did the saints continually consider this, that Christ dwells in them, that he is grieved, and troubled at all their unbelief, unruly passions, worldly desires, foolish imaginations; surely they could not but be much more watchful over themselves, than generally they are. He is refreshed when we walk with him, and hold fellowship with him. To turn aside from him, to hold fellowship with the world or flesh, this grieves him and burdens him. Oh, *grieve not the spirit of God, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption*. And let me tell you, if you do, though he will not utterly depart from you, nor take his kindness away for evermore; yet he will do that shall make your heart ake, your joints tremble, and break all your bones in pieces. For,

(1.) He will depart from you, as to all sense of his presence, that you shall have neither joy, nor comfort, nor peace. He will hide his face, and make you believe (as we say) that he is gone utterly from you. And this he will do, not for a day, or a night, or so, but for a great while together. You shall go to seek him, and you shall not find him; yea beg, and cry, and have no answer. Now all the world for one smile from Christ, for one impression of his presence upon my heart, and all in vain. When the spirit of Christ was thus departed from *David* upon his miscarriage, as to the sense and joy of it, how doth he cry out? *Make me to hear the voice of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice*, Psal. li. 8. If thou valuest the presence of Christ at no greater rate, but to jeopard it upon every occasion, thou mayst haply go without the comfort of it all thy days. Examine yourselves, is it not so with some of you? Have you not lost the sense of the presence of Christ by your folly and uneven walking? Perhaps you value it not much, but go on as *Sampson* with his hair cut, and think to do as at other times; but if the *Philistines* set upon thee, it will be sorrow and trouble, in every assault thou wilt find thyself a lost man, sooner or later it will be bitterness to thee.

(2.) He will depart, as to the efficacy of his working in thee, and leave thee so weak, that thou shalt not be able to walk with God. His spirit is a *spirit of grace and supplications*. He will so withdraw it, that thou shalt find thy heart in a poor condition, as to those things. To be cold in prayer, dead in hearing, estranged from meditation, slight in all duties, this shall be thy portion: a frame that a tender soul would tremble to think of. Ah, how many poor creatures are come to this state in these days, by their neglect and contempt of Christ dwelling in them! They have lost their first love, their first life, their graces are ready to die, and their whole soul is asleep, in a heartless, lifeless, zealous frame. They shall be saved, *but yet as through fire*.

(3.) He will depart as to assurance of what is to come, as well as to a sense of what is present. It is the indwelling spirit of Christ that gives assurance: hereby are we *sealed to the day of redemption*. He *bearth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God*. Upon our grieving him, he will withdraw as to this also. We shall be bewildered, and in the dark, not knowing what will become of our souls to eternity. For if Christ by his spirit do not speak peace, who shall?

*Observation 3.* Doth he dwell in us by his grace?

(1.) Let us first know whence all graces are, that in a want, or weakness of them, we may know whither to go for a supply. *Of his fulness we receive, and grace for grace*. All supplies of graces are from Christ. *Lord, increase our faith*, say the Apostles. Not only faith originally is from him, but all increases of it also. I believe,



*believe, help thou my unbelief*, says the poor man. We wrestle and struggle with a little grace, a little faith, a little love, a little joy, and are contented if we can keep our heads above water, that we be not quite sunk and lost. How sweet would it be with us, if upon a serious consideration from whence all these graces flow, we would apply ourselves to draw out farther degrees and heightnings of them, whereby he might dwell more plentifully in us, and we might always converse with him in his gracious train of attendants. How this may be done in particular, is not my business now to shew.

(2.) Learn to tender the graces of Christ, as those which hold out his presence to us. Let us tender them in our own hearts, and prize them in whomsoever they are. They are pledges of the indwelling of Christ. Certainly if men valued Christ, they would more value his graces. Many pretend to love him, to honour him, yea with *Peter* to be ready to die with him, or for him; but what evil surmises have they of the graces of Christ appearing in others? how do they call them hypocrisy, humour, folly, pride, singularity, with other terms of a later invention? I cannot so easily believe, that any one can love the Lord *Jesus*, and hate the appearances of him in others. Where is any thing of Christ, there is also Christ.

(3.) *Jesus* Christ is the great avenger of this house, and of all the injuries or wrongs that are done unto it. *All*, saith he, *that devour Israel shall offend*, Jer. ii. 3. He will not hold him guiltless, that rises up against it. See *Isa.* lix. 15, 16, 17, 18. He takes upon him the avenging of his house, as his own proper work: *Shall he not avenge his elect? He will do it speedily*. See also *Isa.* lxiii. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. How dreadful is he in the execution of his revenging judgments against the enemies thereof? So also is he described, *Rev.* xix. 13, 14, 15. He hath promised to make the stones of this house heavy stones, they shall burden all that touch them, *Zech.* xii. 3. He comes forth of the myrtle trees in the bottom (his lowly people, in a low condition) with the red horse following him, *Zech.* i. 8. Upon this account he fearfully broke the old Roman, pagan empire, *Rev.* vi. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. and will as fearfully destroy the antichristian, Roman power, with all its adherents, *Rev.* xvii. 18, 19. Sooner or later he will call to an account every instrument of persecution in the world. Hence he is said to be a lion in the behalf of this house, that treads down all before him, *Micah* v. 8. *Jacob* says of him in *Judah*, *He is a lion, as an old lion, who shall rouse him up?* Gen. xlix. 9. Suppose any do rouse him up: how then? *He will not lie down, until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain*, Numb. xxiii. 24. Many poor creatures have, by their opposition to his house, roused up this lion: and what hath been the issue? what attempts have been to cause him to lie down again, all in vain? If he be once roused up, he will not couch down, until he eat and drink the blood of the slain. But suppose great opposition be made unto him: will he not give over? Not at all. *As a lion that cometh upon his prey, if a multitude of shepherds be called forth against him, he will not be afraid at their voice, nor abase himself at their noise*, *Isa.* xxxi. 4. In brief, sooner or later, temporally, or eternally, he will avenge all the injuries, and destroy all the enemies of his holy dwelling, 1 *Thes.* i. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

And these are some of the relations, wherein the Lord Christ stands unto this house of God, being made thereby unto it, beauty and glory, comeliness and excellency. The carrying on of this building, by the union of all the stones thereof to the foundation, and their cementing one to another by faith, love, and order, I shall not now treat of, nor of the following points of the text.

The general *Uses* of what hath been said, are three, the heads whereof I shall name.

*Use* 1. See the eminent privilege of them which are indeed stones of this house, which is living, strong, and glorious, which is so nearly related to the Lord Christ. There is more of duty, dignity, and safety in this thing, than can easily be expressed. To do service unto Christ as his, to have the honour of being his, and to be safeguarded as his, are great privileges. Let them, who have any sense of these things, farther draw out these particulars, from what hath been spoken.

*Use* 2. Learn hence the vanity of resting upon outward Church privileges, if we are not withal interested in this spiritual estate. Where men are living stones indeed, they lie in beauty and order in the assemblies; where they are otherwise, where assemblies are made up of dead rubbish, and yet cry, *The house of the Lord, the house*



house of the Lord, the Lord Jesus abhors those assemblies, he stands not in these relations unto them.

Use 3. See hence the ruin of persecution, that hath appeared in the world in various forms. It hath put on all manner of colours and pretences, and prevailed with all sorts of persons at one time or other to close with it. What hath been the issue? what is like to be? The house indeed hath been battered sometimes, but they who have come against it have been broken all to pieces. Shall the residue of men, who under new pretences, or old ones new painted, drive on the same design, shall they prosper? Thou, O Lord Jesus, in thine anger wilt cut them off. The Lord open the eyes of the sons of men, that they may not hope any more to separate between Christ and his saints, between whom there are so many everlasting relations.

Μένω σὸς οὐκ ὄν, διὰ τὴν Χρῆσ, ὅτι ἡ δόξα ἡ τὴν τῶν δυνάμεων. Ἀμήν.

## \*SERMON XXXVII.

The Advantage of the Kingdom of Christ in the shaking of the Kingdoms of the World: Or, Providential Alterations in their Subserviency to Christ's Exaltation.

To the Supreme Authority of the Nation, the Commons assembled in Parliament.

Right Honourable,



F all the times which the Holy One of Israel hath caused to pass over the nations of the world, there hath not any from the days of old been so filled with eminent discoveries of his presence, power, and providence, in disposing of all affairs here below according to the counsel of his own will, as the season wherein he hath made you a spectacle unto men and angels, being the instrument in his hand to perform all his pleasure. Neither in this season hath he upon any opportunity so gloriously laid hold upon his own strength and goodness, to manifest the fixedness of his eye on those, who are as the apple of it; as in that mighty deliverance, the high praises whereof, according to his good hand upon you, you lately rendred unto him.

\* This Sermon was preached to the Parliament, Oct. 24. 1651. being a solemn Day of Thanksgiving for the Destruction of the Scots Army at Worcester, with sundry other mercies.



The more beauty and desirableness any design against the Lord Christ is cloathed withal, the more power and subtilty it is supported with, the greater is the brightness of his coming for its wasting and desolation. With what deceivableness of unrighteousness, and lies in hypocrisy, the late grand attempt of those in *Scotland*, with their adherents (which also was of the former, and is gone into destruction) was carried on, is in some measure now made naked to the loathing of its abominations. In digging deep to lay a foundation for blood and revenge, in covering private and sordid ends with a pretence of things publick and glorious, in limning a face of religion upon a worldly stock, in concealing distant aims, and bloody animosities, to compass one common end, that a theatre might be provided to act several parts upon, in pleading a necessity from an oath of God unto most desperate undertakings against God, and such like things as these, perhaps it gives not place to any which former ages have been acquainted withal. Now to reject all the claims of the authors and abettors thereof to any commission from above, to divest them of all pretences to religion and zeal thereof, to disappoint them in their expected associations, and to make all their strength to become as tow that hath smelt the fire, hath been his work alone, who takes to himself his great power, to carry on the interest of his kingdom against all opposers. Under the shadow of this mercy, composed of as many branches of wisdom, power, goodness, and faithfulness, as any outward dispensation hath brought forth since the name of Christian was known, do you now sit in council, and the residue of the nation in peace. What obligations from the Lord, what cords of love are upon us? The returnal and improvement of all his dealings with us, which he requireth and expecteth from us, I have pointed you unto in the following sermon. For the present, I shall only add, that as whatever there hath been, of beauty, glory, or advantage unto the people of God in the late transactions, hath been eminently of undeserved grace; so the dreadful vengeance which the Lord hath executed against the men of his enmity and warfare, hath been most righteously procured, by their cloathing cursed designs of revenge, persecution, bondage in soul, and body, spoil and rapine, with the most glorious pretences of zeal, covenant, reformation, and such like things, which never came into their hearts. Therefore that the God of all our mercies and deliverances would for ever keep alive in your hearts a faithful acknowledgment of his grace, and a practical detestation of those ways which are such a provocation to the eyes of his glory, shall be the constant prayer of,

From my Study, *Ch. Ch.*  
Oxon, Nov. 7.

Your most humble Servant

in our dearest Lord,

J. OWEN.



## EZEKIEL xvii. 24.

*And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, and have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the Lord have spoken it and have done it.*



Although all the works of God's providence, which are *great and sought out of all that have pleasure in them*, Psal. cxi. 2. have such a stamp and impress of his own image on them, his wisdom, goodness, power, love, that they declare their author, and reveal from heaven his kindness, and wrath towards the children of men<sup>a</sup>, yet such are the prejudices, lusts, inordinacy of affections and interest of many, that it hath always been a long and difficult task to convince them of his presence in them, when it hath been most uncontrollably evident. The *Egyptians* will wrestle with many a Plague, by thinking the *Magicians can do so*<sup>b</sup>: and the philistines will try to the utmost whether it be his hand, or a chance that happened to them<sup>c</sup>: Lord, saith the prophet, *when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see*, Isa. xvi. 11. Yea oftentimes (especially when judicial blindness is gone forth upon them<sup>d</sup>) though they cannot but see his *arm awaked as of old and made bare*, they will not rest in his sovereign disposal of things, but rise up against the works of his revenge and holiness; like wild beasts that are pursued, when all ways of escape and turning are shut up, they fly in the face of him that follows them; *They repent not of their evil deeds, but bite their tongues for anger, and blaspheme the God of heaven*, Rev. xvi. 10, 11. Yea such is the power of deceiveable lusts, that many will admire at the blindness of others in former generations who considered not the works of God (as the *Jews* in the wilderness) when themselves are under actual contempt of no less glorious dispensations; like the pharisees, who bewailed the folly of their fathers *in persecuting the prophets*, when themselves were endeavouring to *kill the Son of God*, Matth. xxiii. 29, 30. To bring then upon the spirits of men, a conviction of the works of God and his righteousness therein, so as to prevail with them to rest in his determination of things, is a task meet only for him, who knows all their hearts within them, and can carry on the issues of his providence, until to a man they shall say: *Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily he is a God who judgeth in the earth*, Psal. lvi. 11. And this is that which the Lord here undertakes to accomplish. *And, saith he, all the trees, &c.*

In the preaching and prophesying of *Ezekiel*, this one thing among others is eminent, that he was *Artifex parabolarum*, a wonderful framer of *similitudes and parables*<sup>e</sup>, a way of teaching attended with much evidence, clearness and power.

In particular, he frequently compares the world to a *field*, or a *forrest*, and the *inhabitants* of it to the *trees* therein: an allusion exceedingly proper, considering the great variety, and difference of condition both of the one and the other. The trees of the field are some high, some low, some green, some dry, some strong, some weak, some lofty, some contemptible, some fruitful, some barren, some useful, some altogether useless: So that you have all sorts of persons, high and low, of what condition, relation, or interest soever, clearly represented by the trees of the field, and these are the trees in my text.

This Chapter unto ver. 22, is taken up in a riddle, a parable, with the exposition of it<sup>f</sup>. The time being come, that God would destroy the outward visible monarchy of the *Jews*, for their false-worship, tyranny, persecution, and oppression,

<sup>a</sup> Psal. xix. 1, 2. Rom. i. 18. Acts xxvii. 26, 27. <sup>b</sup> Exod. vii. 11, 12. <sup>c</sup> 1 Sam. vi. 9. <sup>d</sup> Isa. vi. 11, 12. <sup>e</sup> Ezek. xx. 45. <sup>f</sup> Cap. xvii. 2.



he employs the king of *Babylon* in that work <sup>g</sup>, who subdues the nation, takes away two kings one after another, and appoints *Zedekiah* a titular governor under him <sup>h</sup>. but the wrath of God being to come upon them to the uttermost, he also closes with *Egypt*, rebels against him <sup>i</sup>, by whose appointment alone he had any right to be a ruler, *ver.* 16. so way is made by his ruin, to put an end to the kingly reign of the house of *David* in *Jerusalem*, *Jer.* xxix. 16, 17. The Lord had of old, erected a kingly government in the house of *David*, *2 Sam.* i. 8, xii. 10. not for any eminency in the government it self, or for the civil advantage of that people; for he had long before chosen and established another consisting of *seventy elders of the people*, *Num.* xi. 24. to whom he added prophets and judges extraordinarily raised up in several generations, according to his promise, *Deut.* xviii. 18. which when the people rejected, he said, they rejected him, or his institution, *1 Sam.* viii. 7. but that it might be a type of the spiritual dominion of their *Messiah* <sup>k</sup>, and so was a part of their *pedagogy* and bondage; as were the residue of their types every one of them; yea the most glorious enjoyments whatsoever, which were granted them, which did yet represent something that was afterwards to be brought in, was part of that servile estate wherein God kept that people, that without us they should not be made perfect. But now this carnal people beholding the outward beauty, lustre, and glory of the type, they began to rest in it, to the neglect of the spiritual kingdom of Christ represented thereby <sup>l</sup>. And thus did they with the rest of their types, until the Lord destroyed all their outward pomp and glory; *Isa.* i. 11, 12. *Jer.* vii. 4, 14, 15. So in particular dealt he with their kingly government, when once they begin to account their bondage their glory, and to embrace the shadow instead of the substance. And this did he to recal them to a serious consideration of the tendency of all typical institutions, and the design he was carrying on concerning the kingdom of Christ.

Hence *ver.* 22. of this *Chapter* he calls them from their thoughtfulness about the destructions, desolations, and contentions that were amongst them in reference to their civil rule, to the consideration of that design, which he was secretly, and silently carrying on under all these dispensations. *I will also take of the highest branch of the high Cedar, and will set it, I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon a high mountain and eminent. In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it, and it shall bring forth boughs and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar, and under it shall dwell all soul of every wing: in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.* As if the Lord should say: There is a great noise in the world about setting up, and plucking down of kings, in this their carnal rule, and many of you see nothing else, you will look no farther; but I also have my work in hand, my design is not bounded within these limits, and outward appearances, I am setting up a king that shall have another manner of dominion and rule, than these worms of the earth. He shall stand, as *Micah* vi. 4.

The setting up then of this kingdom of Christ, *who is the highest branch of the high cedar*, and planting it in the Church, the *mountain of Israel*, with the prosperity hereof, and safety of him that shall dwell therein, is the subject of *ver.* 22, 23. This being that, to the consideration whereof, God here calls his people at such a season, I shall name one or two observations from this connexion of the words.

*Observation 1.* In the midst of all the tumults and imbroilments of the nations, that which the Lord takes peculiarly as his own design, into his own management, is the carrying on of the kingdom of the Lord *Jesus*.

You are about your work, saith the Lord, I also am about mine; you have your branches and cedars, I also have one to plant, that shall flourish. *Dan.* ii. 44. In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, &c. Were not those kings and kingdoms also of his setting up, that it is said, In their days he shall set up one of his own? Yea doubtless, *He changeth the times and the seasons, he setteth up kings and removeth kings,*

<sup>g</sup> *2 Chron.* xxxvi. 17. <sup>h</sup> *2 Kings* xiv. 1, 2, 3. <sup>i</sup> *Jer.* xxxvii. 1. *2 Kings* xxiv. 17. *2 Chron.* xxxvi. 10. <sup>k</sup> *Psal.* xiv. 6. *Hos.* iii. 5. *Isa.* ix. 7. & xvi. 5. *Ch.* xxii. 22. *Jer.* xxiii. 5. *Amos* ix. 11. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 23, 24. *Ch.* xxxvii. 24, 25. <sup>l</sup> *1 Cor.* x. 11. *Acts* xv. 10. *Gal.* iii. 4.



Dan. ii. 21. *He ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will,* Chap. iv. 25. There is not a persecuting *Pharaoh*, but *he raises him up for his own purpose*, Exod. ix. 16. But yet, in respect of the kingdom of his Son, he speaks of them, as if he had nothing to do with them: In their days I will do my own work, advance the kingdom of the Lord Christ.

There are great and mighty works in hand in this nation, tyrants are punished, the jaws of oppressors are broken, bloody, revengeful persecutors disappointed, and we hope, governors set up that may be *just, ruling in the fear of the Lord, that they may be as the light of the morning*, &c. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4. The hand of the Lord hath been wonderfully exalted in all these things: but yet should we rest in them, should they not be brought into an immediate subserviency to the kingdom of the Lord *Jesus*, the Lord will quickly distinguish between them, and his own peculiar design, and say, *In the days of these changes I will do so, and so; speak of them, as if he had nothing to do with them.* The carrying on of the interest of Christ, is his peculiar aim: he his of goodness make it ours also.

*Observation 2.* Among all the designs that are on foot in the World, there is none that hath either stability, fixedness, or final success, but only the design of God concerning the kingdom of Christ.

Other branches may be set, but the branch of the Lord only prospers<sup>m</sup>. The likeliest appearances of other undertakings, are but as the glorious rising of the sun in the morning, quickly clouded. The interest of Christ is like *Joseph*, Gen. xlix. 23, 24. Oft-times the *Archers* shoot at it, and *grieve it*; but in the close the bow thereof abides in strength; and therefore this is the issue of all these dispensations, that the kingdoms and nations are at length to be possessed by the Lord Christ<sup>n</sup>, his sheaf standing up, and all others bowing thereunto.

And unto the consideration of these things, in the midst of all the tumults in the world, doth God effectually recal his people, and withal tells them, how he will carry it on, in the words of my text, *And all the trees, &c.*

In the words three things are to be observed.

*First*, The works that God ascribes to himself.

And that he sets down under a twofold similitude: Of pulling down the *high tree*, and setting up the *low tree*: And of drying up the *green tree*, and making the *dry tree* to flourish. And both these similitudes are coincident, serving only in this redoubling, for the clearer illustration of that, which they shadow out.

*Secondly*, There is the issue that God will carry this out unto in respect of others: *All the trees of the field shall know.*

*Thirdly*, A particular assurance that the Lord gives for the accomplishment of all this, from the engagement of his name, *I the Lord, &c.*

*First*, For the first, the expression of the work of the Lord may be taken two ways: 1. Strictly and properly. 2. Largely, and by the way of analogy and proportion.

1. In the first way you may consider,

(1.) The *tree* that is to be cast down and withered, and that is the *high tree*, and the *green tree*; a *tree* that in their eyes had both beauty and vigour, high and green: this was the Judaical kingdom, admired and delighted in by the *Jews*. This, says God, I will reject; as also he will many a tall *Eliab*, that even some *Samuels* may think to be his anointed.

(2.) The *tree* that is to be exalted and made to flourish, and that is the *low tree*, the *dry tree*, contemptible for growth, it is low, useless for fruit, it is dry. And this is the spiritual kingdom of the *Messiah*, contemned, despised; this, says God, I will exalt, carry on, and make glorious; for though the interest of Christ and the Gospel may seem low, and dry for a season, in comparison of the glory of other flourishing interests, yet in the issue, it shall be exalted above them all.

2. As taken more largely, and by the way of analogy and so,

(1.) The *high* and the *green tree* are the things of the most glorious appearance in the world, persons and states, that seem to be exceedingly suited for the work that

<sup>m</sup> Hag. ii. 6, 7. Heb. xii. 26, 27. Isa. viii. 9, 10. Ch. ix. 7. Chap. xvi. 10. Chap. liii. 10. Psal. xxxiii. 11. Prov. xix. 21. Chap. xxi. 30. Job xxiii. 13. <sup>n</sup> Isa. lx. 12, 13. Rev. xi. 15.



God hath to do: that are in the greatest probability to be eminently instrumental in his hand: but alas, says God, these I will pull down and cause to wither. Perhaps you will think it strange, that a mighty monarchy, a triumphing prelacy, a thriving conformity, should all be brought down; but so it shall be, *Every mountain shall be made a plain.*

(2.) The *low tree*, and the *dry tree*, are things, persons, assemblies, outwardly weak and contemptible, such as wise men do verily believe that God will never use; they will not understand, that such *Moses's* shall be deliverers, but cry, Who made them judges and rulers? But even these will God exalt and cause to flourish: *Every valley shall be exalted.*

Two observations flow from hence, which I shall insist upon.

I. In the carrying on of the interest of Christ, and the Gospel, God will work wonderful providential alterations.

II. The actings of God's providence in carrying on the interest of Christ, shall be exceedingly unsuited to the reasonings and expectations of the most of the sons of men.

Some trees must be pluck'd down, and some raised up; yea, high trees thrown down, and the low caused to flourish. There is the issue of God's thus dealing in respect of others, *all the trees of the field*, &c. By the *trees of the field* are meant men of all sorts, that are concerned in these transactions.

And herein you may observe two things: Something intimated, and that is, an unwillingness in men to own these dispensations of God; hence the Lord undertakes himself to set on a conviction upon them, as a thing of great difficulty: And something expressed, which is the conviction it self, that shall in the issue fall upon them, notwithstanding all their reluctancy. Hence also are these two observations.

*Observation 1.* Men are exceeding unwilling to see and own the hand of God in those works of his providence, which answer not their reasonings, interests and expectations.

*Observation 2.* The Lord will not cease walking contrary to the carnal reasonings of men in his mighty works, for the carrying on the interest of the Lord Jesus, untill his hand be seen, owned, and confessed.

For what remains concerning the assurance of the accomplishment of all this from the engagement of his name, I shall only add: That the power and faithfulness of God are engaged in the carrying on the things of the kingdom of Christ, to the conviction of the most stubborn opposers.

I begin with the first.

I. In the carrying on the interest of Christ and the Gospel, God will work wonderful providential alterations.

Alterations among the trees of the field, nations, states, and men on earth. When the beginning of the saines departure from under the dominion of Anti-Christ, was followed with wars, tumults and destructions: it was objected to Luther, That that doctrine could not be of God, which was attended with such desolations; he replied, according to the vigor of his spirit, *Ego nisi tumultus istos viderem, Christum in mundo esse non crederem*; Did he not see those tumults, he would not believe that Christ was come forth into the world. The Lord tells you how he will bring on his kingdom, *Hag. ii. 6, 7. I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come*, &c. The *desire of the nations*, is to be brought in by the *shaking of the nations*. They are to be civilly moved, that they may be spiritually established. Neither are they only to be shaken, but also to undergo great alterations in their shakings. *Heb. xii. 27. This word yet once more signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain.* They must have a removal, as well as a shaking; *Mirandum, a change, a translation.* Most nations in their civil constitution lie out of order, for the bringing in of the interest of Christ: they must be shaken up, and new disposed of, that all obstacles may be taken away. The day of the Gospel is not only terrible in its discovering light, and as it is a *trying furnace*, *Mal. iii. 2.* but also in its devouring fury, as it is a *consuming oven*, *chap. iv. 1.*



There are three principle seasons of the Lord's eminent appearance to carry on the kingdom of Christ, and the Gospel, and all attended with dreadful providential alterations: and unto one of these heads may all particular actings be reduced.

1. The first is, the promulgation of the Gospel among the *Jews* by the Lord Christ himself, and his Apostles: what this was attended withal is graphically described, *Matth.* xxiv. 6, 7. *And ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars; for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.* And the close of it you have, *ver.* 29. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.* The Judaical state in all the height and glory of it was utterly consumed, so that *all flesh*, all the *Jews*, were in danger of utter destruction, *ver.* 22. Their own historian himself, a *Jew*, affirming, that from the foundation of the world never was there such destruction and desolation brought upon any nation. Which words of his are a comment on that prediction of our Saviour, *Matth.* xxiv. 21. and the reason of this eminent desolation you have, *Isa.* ix. 5, 6.

2. The second is, in the farther carrying on of the Gospel, after the destruction of *Jerusalem*, throughout the world of the Gentiles, subject then in a great proportion to the Roman Empire. And what is the issue hereof? The opening of the six seals immediately follows thereon, *Rev.* vi. Which after manifold and various alterations, end in that dreadful dissolution of the Pagan Empire, which you have described from *ver.* 14. to the end.

3. The most signal is the coming of the Lord Christ to recover his people from anti-christian idolatry and oppression; which of all others is and shall be attended with the most astonishing alterations and desolations, pulling down of high trees, and exalting them that are low: thence is that war, described, *Rev.* xvii. 14. and that mighty vengeance poured out by the Lord Christ on the nations, their kings, and captains, *Ch.* xix. *ver.* 11. to the end; which the holy Ghost describes by a collection of all the most dreadful expressions, which are any where used to set out great devastations in the old Testament.

And this is the head whereunto the present actings of providence in this nation are to be referred, they all tend to the accomplishment of his main design therein. He that thinks *Babylon* is confined to *Rome*, and its open idolatry, knows nothing of *Babylon*, nor of the new *Jerusalem*: the depth of a subtle mystery doth not lie in gross visible folly: it hath been insinuating itself into all the nations for sixteen hundred years, and to most of them is now become as the marrow in their bones: before it be wholly shaken out, these heavens must be dissolved, and the earth shaken; their tall trees hewed down, and set a howling, *Rev.* xviii. and the residue of them transplanted from one end of the earth to another. This I say then is the work that the Lord hath now in hand; and this is a day of thankfulness in reference to what he hath done for us in this nation. I know no better way of praising God for any work, than the finding out of his design therein, and closing with him in it. God hath gone with you, I hope, now to the end of your work, leave him not until he comes to the end of his. He hath compelled you to go with him one mile for your own good, go with him two for his glory. The two tribes and an half sat not down in their own possessions, until the whole work of the Lord was done. I speak not with respect to any engagements of war with foreign nations; what have I to do with things that are above me? You will find work enough for your zeal to the kingdom of Christ at home; and this is the work of thankfulness which you are called unto.

Now the reasons of this are,

(1.) Because amongst all men, where the kingdom of Christ is to be set up, there is something or other possessed, that he alone must and will have: and therefore the Lord giving Jesus Christ but his own inheritance, it must needs be attended with great alterations. I dare say, until of late (whatever now is) there was not any state or nation in the world, where the name of Christ is known, but that there was an entrenchment upon that which is the pure portion and inheritance of the Lord Christ, and that detained with falshood and force. Yea, such is the folly and blindness of the most of men, that they think their greatest interest lies in holding that



that fast, which Christ will take from them: *Pharaoh*-like, that thought it the great advantage of his kingdom not to let the people go, when it proved the ruin of him and his land. This I dare say will in the issue be the ruin of all, or most of the tall trees of *Europe*; they have grasped much of the power of Christ, and endeavour to impose on the consciences of his in the worship of God, or otherwise oppress them in what he hath purchased for them; and, by a dreadful mistake, they suppose their own interest lies therein, which makes them hold fast, until Christ hath shaken them all to pieces, and taken away even that also which was their own. The late King had learned a saying from his predecessor, *No Bishop, no King*: Hence he supposes his main interest to lie in holding fast prelacy; whatever he seems to part withal, that he will not let go, that's his main interest: and what is this prelacy? a mere antichristian encroachment upon the inheritance of Christ. Christ coming to take his own, shakes the other to pieces; those who would have been our oppressors in *Scotland*, but that God hath crushed the cockatrice in the shell, and filled the pit with their dead bodies which they had digged for us; they also had prepared a *procruster bed*, a heavy yoke, a *beast* that had it grown to perfection, would have had *horns* and *hoofs*, and in maintaining this, they think their great interest to lie. And in holding this fast, are they after all their associations, broken in pieces, and this is one cause.

(2.) The works that God hath to do in such a season, require it: God hath three great works to do, in the day of his carrying on the interest of Christ and the Gospel:

[1.] He hath great revenges to take.

[2.] He hath great deliverances to work.

[3.] He hath great discoveries to make.

I shall but touch on each.

[1.] He hath great revenges to take, and that on three sorts of persons:

1.) On oppressing *Babylonians*; false worshipers and persecutors: whilst the bride is preparing for the Lord Christ, he goes forth, with the armies of heaven following him to take vengeance on these his enemies, *Rev. xix. 11*. These are the *Aboloms*, the usurpers of his throne, the *Hamans*, the forcers of his spouse, the chiefest adversaries of his kingdom: *He shall fill places with dead bodies* of these, and upon this account, *wound the heads over many countries*, *Psal. cx. 6*. The axe is laid to the root of many a tall tree on this score, even in this nation where he is reckoning for blood, and imposition of yokes; and he hath found out men inheriting this spirit from one generation to another.

2.) Scoffing *Edomites*: there is a twofold quarrel that God hath with that generation of men. Their rejoicing at *Sion's* distress, and desiring its increase, *Psal. clvii. 6*. And their endeavour to destroy the residue, when at any time streightned, *Obad. 14*. How many in the late trial rejoiced in the streights of *Sion*? that sat expecting our destruction, that they might have risen to stand in the cross ways to have cut off them that escaped, wherewith should they have reconciled themselves to their master, but with the heads of the servants of Christ? God hath vengeance in such a day as this for *Edom* also.

3.) Lukewarm *Laodiceans*, neutralists, that *drink wine in bowls*, and are no way moved at the suffering of *Joseph*. *Gallios* that care for none of these things. There is not a generation in the world with whom the Lord is more provoked, than with this *Meroz* generation: when God is jealous for *Sion*, he is *displeased with them that are at ease*, *Zech. i. 14, 15*. Now considering how many persons of all these sorts are fixed in the nation, and you will see that vengeance cannot be taken on them, without great alterations.

[2.] He hath deliverances to work. It is the time of *visiting the prisoners of hope*: the prey must be taken out of the jaws of the terrible: every *staff of the oppressor broken in pieces*: yea, he delivers his saints, not only from all that they have suffered, but from all that was in the contrivance of their enemies to bring upon them, which is greater than they can execute: and this will cost something before the *Pharaohs* of the nation will let his people go.



[3.] He hath great trials to make.

1.) Of his own that they may be purged.

2.) Of hypocrites, that they may be discovered.

1.) The day of carrying on the interest of Christ, is a day of purifying and purging, *Dan. xii. 10. Many shall be purified and made white and tried*: that is a day like a furnace, *Mal. iii. 3.* that will consume dross and tin. The remainder of the *people must be brought through the fire*, *Zech. xiii. 9.* *Joshua's* garments are defiled by dwelling in *Babylon*<sup>1</sup>: many of Christ's own have contracted rust and soil, have got carnal interests and engagements that must be scoured from them.

2.) Of the discovery of hypocrites. It is emphatically said of the saints, that they *follow the Lamb whither ever he goes*<sup>2</sup>. All sorts of professors will follow him in some paths, in such as are consistent with their power, dominion, and advantages, they are even ready to run before him: but he hath some paths that are unpleasing to flesh and blood, paths that he gives no loaves in, here men that say they are *Jews, and are not, but lie*, give quite out from him. Now upon all these several accounts, must that day of the Gospel of necessity be attended with great providential alteration.

*Use 1.* To discover where dwells that spirit that actuates all the great alterations that have been in these nations. Such things have been brought to pass as have filled the world with amazement. A monarchy of some hundred years continuance, always affecting, and at length wholly degenerated into tyranny, destroyed, pulled down swallowed up, a great and mighty potentate that had caused *terror in the land of the living, and laid his sword under his head*, brought to punishment for blood. Hypocrites and selfish men abundantly discovered, wise men made fools, and the strong as water; a nation, that of *Scotland*, engaging for and against the same cause, backward and forward, twice or thrice, always seeking where to find their own gain and interest in it, at length totally broken in opposition to that cause, wherewith at first they closed: multitudes of professors, one year praying, fasting, mightily rejoicing upon the least success, bearing it out as a sign of the presence of God; another year whilst the same work is carried on, cursing, repining, slighting the marvelous appearance of God in answer unto prayers and most solemn appeals, being very angry at the deliverances of *Sion*: on the other side, all the mighty successes that God hath followed poor despised ones withal, being with them as with those in days of old, *Heb. xi. 33. Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the Aliens.* He, I say, that shall consider all this, may well enquire after that principle which being regularly carried on, yet meeting with the corruption and lusts of men, should so wheel them about, and work so many mighty alterations. Now what is this, but the most effectual design of the Lord to carry on the interest of Christ and the Gospel, whatever stands in the way. This bears down all before it, wraps up some in blood, some in hardness, and is most eminently straight and holy in all these transactions. *Isa. xiv. 32. What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Sion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.*

*Use 2.* To magnify the goodness of God, who unto us hath sweetened and seasoned all his dreadful dispensations, and all the alterations in those nations, with this his gracious design running through them all: this is that which puts all their beauty and lustre on them, being outwardly dreadful and horrible. The carrying on of this, (which is hidden from the men of the world, who have therefore no joy) is the only thing we have to rejoice at in this day, our victories have no glory but what they receive from hence: *Isa. iv. 2.* That blood which is an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord, is the blood of the enemies of this design of his: the vengeance that is to be delighted in, is the vengeance of the temple: heaven, and all that is in it, is called to rejoice, when *Babylon is destroyed with violence and fury*, *Rom. xx. 21.* when those who would not have the King of saints reign, are brought forth and slain before his face: and in this, God makes distinguishing work, and

<sup>1</sup> Zech. iii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xiv. 4. John vi. 26.



calls to rejoicing: *Isa. lxx. 13, 14. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.*

Thus the saints are called to sing the *song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb*, *Rev. xv. 3.* The deliverance by *Moses* was a temporal deliverance from outward yokes and bondage: the deliverance of the *Lamb* was a spiritual deliverance, from spiritual bondage: the deliverance that God will give his saints from this oppression shall be mixed; as their bondage partakes of both, so shall their deliverance be: and therefore they shall sing the *song of Moses and the Lamb*. If ever any persons in the world had cause to sing the *song of Moses and the Lamb*, we have this day, the bondage prepared for us was both in spirituals and temporals: about a tyrant full of revenge, and a discipline full of persecution, hath been our contest: whether the yoke of the one and the other should by the sword and violence be put upon our necks, and consciences, is our controversy: there was both *Egypt* and *Babel* in the bondage prepared; and both these enraged: *Pharaoh* doubled the task of the *Israelites* when they did but speak of liberty; What would he have done had he recovered them under his hand after they were escaped? What would the thoughts of that man of blood have been, and his ways, had he prevailed after so many provocations? *Cade ac sanguine, quisquis ab exilio.* And what would their ways have been, who thought to sit on his right hand and his left in his kingdom? But of this afterward. Now God having broken both the one snare and the other, surely we have cause to sing the *song of Moses and of the Lamb* this day: when others are in the condition mentioned *Isa. viii. 21, 22.*

It is true, all things are not clear to all perhaps that serve the Lord: some cannot rejoice in the works of our God, but they are not the first on whom that sin hath been charged: nothing more frequent in the Scripture, than the laying this sin at the door of professors, *that they set not their hearts to the work of the Lord*: if they are of the *armies in heaven*, they will at length learn to follow the *Lamb*: and for the present, musick with some discords, may make melody for the Lord: the *song of Deborah* is full of complaint; division of *Ruben, Gilead, Dan, and Ashur*, slow in their helps: *Meroz* wholly neutral: though we have of all these sorts, yet may we make a song to the Lord, that in *Jesus Christ* may be acceptable this day. And the Lord I hope will open the eyes of them amongst us, and give them to cry for mercy when his righteous judgments have driven them from all their holds. When the mighty army was destroyed in the *North* about three years ago, many would see nothing in it, but that they had not the blessing of the Church. Hence they began to think of it as *Balaak* did of *Balaam*, *Whom he blessed, they were blessed, and whom he cursed, they were cursed*. God could not bear the robbing him of his glory, and giving it unto selfish men: they shall bless and bless again, and be no more heard than the *Baalists* cry: even to the Lord shall they cry, but he will not regard them: the Lord, I say, will drive them from such holds as these, that they may acknowledge his hand. Let then the great work of the Lord be owned, be rejoiced in, for it will certainly bear down all that stand in the way of it: neither is there the least true consolation in any of these alterations, but what arises from a closing with it.

Come we to the second Observation. II. The actings of God's providence in carrying on the interest of *Christ*, are and shall be exceedingly unsuited to the reasonings and expectations of the most of men. He hath a glorious work here to be accomplished: of whom should he now make use? surely the high tree, the green tree will be employed. If one be to be anointed in the family of *Jesse*, will it not be goodly *Eliab*? if the King will honour any, who should it be but *I*, says *Haman*? but all on the contrary, the low dry tree is taken, *David* from the flock, and *Mordecai* from the gate: the thoughts of God are not as our thoughts, neither doth he look on outward appearances, To give some instances in his most signal actings in this kind.

<sup>1</sup> *Isa. xliii. 18.* <sup>2</sup> *Psal. xlviii. 42, 43, 44.* <sup>3</sup> *Judges v. 15, 17, 23.*

<sup>4</sup> *Num. xxii. 6.* <sup>5</sup> *1 Kings xviii. 26.*



The *Jews* knew that God had a great work to do in giving of a *Messiah*, the Saviour of the world: they are raised up to expectation of it: upon every considerable appearance, they cry, Is this he? And what withal did they expect? Outward glory, beauty, deliverance, carnal power and dominion: God at length comes to do his work, and bringeth forth a poor man, that had not where to lay his head, followed by a few fishermen and simple women, that had *neither form nor comeliness that he should be desired*; persecuted, despised, crucified from the beginning to the end, quite another thing than what they looked for<sup>v</sup>. Thus lays he the foundation of the Gospel, in the person of his Son, by frustrating the expectations of the most of men; *the stone which the builders refused*, &c. Again seeing salvation is of the *Jews*, *the rod of Christ's strength, being to be sent out of Sion*, and that living waters were to flow forth from *Jerusalem*; the Gospel being from thence to be published through the world, who should the Lord chuse to do it? Surely the great, the wise, the learned of that nation; the high priests, learned scribes, devout pharisees, that might have won their message some repute and credit in the world<sup>w</sup>. But contrary to all the wisdom of the flesh, he takes a few ignorant, weak, unlearned fishermen, despised upon all accounts, and commits this great work unto them: and accordingly out they go, friendless, helpless, harbourless, unto their great employment. The like instruments for the most part, did he employ to make an entrance upon the great work of casting down false worship and idolatry. Moreover, in that great work for the Lord Christ, which is to be accomplished in the ruin and destruction of *Babel*, when it must be done with might, power, and strength, with armies and blood, will not now the Lord use the *high and green tree*? Many Kings and potentates having in profession embraced the doctrine of the Gospel; nobles and great ones having given up their names in appearance unto Christ, who but they, shall now be used in this work of the Lord? But yet plainly the Lord tells them the contrary, *Reu. xviii. 9.* all these persons bewail the judgments of God that are executed on *Babel*, which shall be done by low dry trees.

To give one instance in the mighty works which God hath lately wrought in these nations, a work of reformation and carrying on the interest of Christ is here undertaken: what upon this are the thoughts of the most of men? whither were their eyes turned? Tall trees, green trees are pitched on. This and that great Lord, popular with the multitude, *Eliab*s in their eyes, they must do it; the *Scots* shall certainly effect it: the King shall be taken from his evil counsel, he shall be active in it. A Church government shall be set up, and no man suffered to live in the nation that will not submit unto it. Some like the sons of *Zebedee* shall sit on the right and left hand of Christ, in the kingdom they were setting up for him; these, and those sound good men shall be next the King, then all will be great and glorious indeed. What now I pray? Do all things indeed suit and answer these expectations and reasonings of men? Doth God accomplish the thoughts of their hearts? Alas, the high trees rested on, proved for the most part *broken reeds that run into our hands*, and let out our blood in abundances to no purpose; the top bough, hoped for, fallen as an abominable branch; the *Scots* shaken and broken with unparalleled destruction, in the maintenance of the interest and cause, which at first they prosperously opposed; the *iron yoke*, pretended to be that of Christ (though it be fleshly, carnal, and cruel, suited to the wisdom of a man, and his rule be spiritual, meek, and gentle) cast off and thrown away: low trees, dry trees, despised ones, contemned ones, without form or comeliness exalted, used, employed, and the hand of the Lord evidently lifted up, in all these transactions.

Some reasons of this may be given, and the first is taken from the corruptions of the hearts of men, squaring the works of God to their fleshly reasonings, corrupt interests and principles. They are bold with the wisdom of God, and conclude, thus and thus things ought to be, ordering their thoughts for the most part, according to their corrupt and carnal advantages. I shall instance both as to carnal advantages, and principles.

<sup>v</sup> Luke iii. 15. John i. 19, 20. Acts i. 6. Mat. xx. 21, 22. Mat. xiii. 55. Chap. viii. 20. John iv. 48, 49. 1st. Tim. ii. 3. Phil. ii. 7, 8. &c.

<sup>w</sup> John iv. 22. Psal. cx. 2. Ezek. xlvii. 1. Zech. xiv. 8. Acts iv. 13. 1 Cor. i. 20, 26, 27, 28.



(1.) Carnal power and glory seem excellent to the *Jews*: hence think they, When God gives us our Messiah, all this must be accomplished: their affections are disordered by corrupt lusts and desires, and that enslaves their minds to strange apprehensions: God comes in his own way, and how cross do things run to their expectations? What was the corrupt design of many in *Scotland*? That they might set up a son of *Tabaal* in *England*, and themselves be great under him; that they and their partakers might impose on the residue of the nation, especially in the things of God: their great desire that things should be thus, corrupts their minds to think that it ought to be so, and shall be so. Hence ambition to rule, and to have all under their power, even in conscience, is quickly mistaken for zeal to the kingdom of Christ, re-inthroning of tyranny is loyalty, and all according to covenant. As if men had sworn to be good to themselves, and to be true to their own interests all their days, which surely few need to be sworn to. Thus mens minds and judgments are distempered by their lusts and interests, which makes them frame a way for God to proceed in, which when he doth not, how are they surprized?

(2.) For principle. Men take up principles that they will adhere unto: wise principles forsooth, yea and very righteous too: all things whatever that fall out, must be squared unto their principles; they expect that nothing must be done but what suits unto them; and if any thing contrary be wrought, even of God himself, how deceived, how disappointed are they? The most tremendous judgment of God in this world is the hardning of the hearts of men; this seals them up for the most part to destruction: a thing it is often mentioned in the Scripture, and many subtile disputes there are, how it should come forth from him, who is most holy, seeing it is the greatest sin of the creature.

I shall give you my thoughts in a most eminent instance or two, as to one particular of it. Look on *Pharaoh*, of whom it is most signally spoken, that God *hardned his heart*: how did the Lord accomplish this? *Pharaoh* settles himself upon as righteous principles as ever any of the sons of men could do: one is, *That it belongs to the chief ruler of a nation to see to the profit and glory of the nation*. What more righteous principle is there in the world? You that talk of your principles, give me one more righteous than this. Hence he concludes, that if it be incumbent on him to see that the realm receive no detriment, he must not let the people go, by whom they received so many great advantages: God confirms his heart in these principles, which are good in themselves, but abominable when taken up against the mind and providence of God: hence he and his perished in their principles acting against the appearance of God. It is also said of *Sihon*, the King of the *Amorites*, that *his heart was hardned that he would not let the people go through his land*. How I pray? Even by adhering to that wise principle, *That it is not meet to let a potent enemy into the bowels of a people*; and this made way for his ruin.

Thus is it with many; they fix on principles, good in general, and in their season. Old bounds must not be broken up; order must not be disturbed: let God appear never so eminently, so mightily, they will keep to their principle, what is this, but judicial hardness. And this, I say, is one reason why the workings of God in such a day as this, are so unsuited to the expectations of men; they square his works to the interests and principles, which it will not answer.

2. God chooseth thus to do things above and besides the expectations of men, that his presence, and the presence of the Lord Christ may be the more conspicuous in the world. Did the Lord always walk in paths that men had rationally, that is, foolishly (for such is our wisdom in the ways of God) allot to him, the appearances of his glory would be exceedingly eclipsed. It is hard for men to have a clear and naked view of the power of God in effecting any thing, when there is great help of means to do it: but it is much harder to discern the wisdom of God in an affair, when mens own wisdom and designing is all accomplished. But now, when the way of God is like *the way of an eagle in the air*; when *his paths are in the deep*, and *his footsteps are not known*: then is he glorious in his goings. Men think all things would be very glorious, if they might be done according to their mind; perhaps indeed they would, but with their glory, not the glory of God.



3. God will do it for the hardning of many false empty professors, and others in the world, that the judgments appointed may come upon them to the uttermost. The hardning of men to their destruction, being a close and inward work, is one of the most eminent acts of the providence of God in governing the world: by this, he accomplisheth most of the judgments that he hath threatned. Now there is not any dispensation of God towards man, but he can, and doth sometimes cause it to be so managed, and ordered, that it shall be a way and means of hardning such as he hath appointed thereunto: some are hardned by the word, some by the mercies, some by judgments. Amongst other ways that he useth for this purpose, this is one, the disposal of the works of his providence contrary to the reasonings of men, doing things unlikely and unfitly in the eyes of flesh and blood, that so they may despise those ways of his, and be broken in opposition unto them. Take an instance in *Pharaoh's* last hardning for destruction: when he brought the people out of *Egypt*, he did not lead them the direct way to *Canaan*, but carries them into the wilderness, and shuts them up between the mountains and the sea: *Pharaoh* justly concludes that they are entangled beyond escape, and that he shall surely overtake them and destroy them; this draws him out to his ruin: had God led them in the straight path, probably he had not pursued after them, but the Lord lays this as a plot for his destruction. God will harden *Jeroboam*, and therefore a lion shall slay the prophet that preached against his idolatry. So was it with the *Jews*, they expect all glory to attend the coming of the *Messiah*; and after the coming of him indeed, God follows them with judgments to a total desolation; which being so unsuited unto the dispensation they expected, hardness thereby is come upon them to the uttermost. *Tertullian* says, he dares say, That the Scriptures were on purpose framed in many things to give occasion to proud and curious, unhumbl'd wits, to stumble and fall. And I dare say, that the Lord doth order many of his works in the world, in ways past finding out, on purpose to give occasion to many to stumble and fall. God filleth many mighty works, that could not otherwise be brought about, by hardning the hearts of men: the hardning of the late King's heart was an engine whereby he wrought mighty things and alterations: had not God laid obduracy and stubbornness upon his spirit, we had long since in all probability been ruined. To accomplish this end then God will so order the works of his providence, that men shall reason themselves into unreasonable and brutish hardness and stupidity. Thus God hath done, in the days wherein we live; his mighty acts that he hath wrought, both for the matter of the things done, and the manner of their doing, have been so contrary to mens principles, interest, expectations and reasons, that they have slighted them to such a degree of hardning, that they seem to have no reason left at all; and when it comes to that, God will fall judicially upon the very faculties of their souls; he will blind their eyes, deprive them of their judgment and insight into things, that they shall be as incapable of God's mind as fools, and give them up to vile affections, to do the things that are not seemly, as it hath fallen out with too many amongst us.

Let us now make some use of this point.

*Use.* It serves then, to discover the vanity of those men, who because the works of God have not been carried on in ways suitable to their reasonings and expectations, do utterly reject them, disown them, and oppose him in them. Can these men give any one instance, of any one eminent work of God, that he hath brought about by such ways, and means, as men would rationally allot thereunto, especially in things that are in immediate subserviency to the kingdom of the Lord Christ? Can they instance that they have been so managed? Nay, hath not this been a means to harden multitudes to their destruction, that have limited the holy One, and chalked out paths for him to walk in? I cannot but fear, that it was a great provocation of the eyes of God's glory, that at the beginning, and in the carrying on the great alterations that have been wrought by his providence among us, we did speak of confirming and continuing under any condition (what-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ix. 18. Deut. ii. 30. Psal. lxxxi. 12. & lxi. 22. Josh. xi. 20. Isa. vi. 11. 9, 10, 11, 12. Joh. xiii. 40, 41, 42, 43. Deut. xxxii. 15.



soever, any things, or persons, which it was in his design to avert: We must be promising to keep up the high tree, and to keep down the low tree, which was not at all in his thoughts, neither ever came it into his heart. I hope he hath taught us (though with thorns) to follow him sometimes, like *Abraham, not knowing whither we go*. Now the Lord convince them who are yet under this darkness; that think the ways of God not equal, because not measured by their line; that bring their crooked rules unto that which is really strait, and cast it away, as abominable. The children of *Israel* had got a proverb against the ways of God; it was so taken for granted that the ways of his providence were not right and strait, that it was grown into a common by-word: a little discovery of the pride and hypocrisy of their own hearts undeceived them at last.

I shall not say to our brethren, that they have shewed this day, that if *Abraham* had lived, and all we had been slain, it would have been well pleasing to them; but this I shall say, that it is a sad sign, that our ways please not God, when his ways please not us at all.

There being not space for handling the two remaining *propositions* contained in the text, I shall go forth to one general *use*, and so conclude.

*Use*. Now this I shall take from that of the prophet *Amos*, iv. 12. the generality of the people being exercised with various judgments, the residue of them are said to be saved *as a firebrand out of the burning*; that is, powerfully, effectually, from a very terrible, and a very near destruction. After all the Lord's great dispensations of providence, in carrying on his own design, this being the condition of the people of this nation, many being destroyed by foregoing judgments, and the residue now saved like a firebrand out of the burning, God having given us this issue of his mighty works, in pulling down the high tree, and exalting the low tree, it cannot but be our wisdom to close with the counsel which God gives in such a condition; and that you have, I say, *Amos* iv. 12. *Because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel*. Seeing that all this is done, prepare to meet thy God, O *England*: prepare to meet thy God, O parliament: prepare to meet thy God, O army.

To lead you a little towards the performance of this duty, it being that, and that alone, which is incumbent on you, I shall shew you these two things.

What it is wherein we are to meet our God.

How we must meet him therein.

For the first, there are three ways wherein we must meet the Lord, if we desire to answer his mind in any of these dispensations.

(1.) In the way of his providence.

(2.) In the way of his worship.

(3.) In the way of his holiness.

The eminent ways of the providence of God in these days may be referred unto three heads.

[1.] His general design to pull down all those high oppositions to the kingdom of his Son which I have mentioned.

[2.] His peculiar aim to stain the glory of all flesh, to pull down high trees, that no flesh may glory.

[3.] His shaking of all endearments and enjoyments here below, that the hearts of his may be fixed only on the things that cannot be shaken.

And these upon all accounts and considerations whatever, appear to be the main tendencies of the actions of providence in these our days.

(1.) There is the way of his worship, wherein also he will be met. It is most remote from my thoughts to enter into contests concerning that peculiar way of Gospel worship which Christ hath appointed. It sufficeth me, that seeing God hath promised, that in these days he will have his tabernacle with men; and that *barrenness and drought shall be on every soul that comes not up to his feast of tabernacles*, it is too manifestly sufficient to press men to meet him in that way, according as he shall graciously make our light into them.

(2.) There is the way of his holiness, as he is holy, so are all his ways holy, so he will be met and walked with, in all ways of holiness and obedience to Jesus



Christ; and these are the ways wherein God will be met by his remnant, his delivered remnant.

2. What then is it to meet the Lord in any of these ways? What is it to meet him in the way of his providence, his worship, his holiness? To meet one in any thing, is to close with him in that thing: we say, herein, I meet you, when we are of one mind. To meet the Lord in these things, is to close with the will and mind of God in them; this is that which I would exhort you unto, yea lay the charge of God upon you this day, even on you and your companions, who are as a brand snatched out of the burning.

(1.) To meet God in the way of his providence.

[1.] Meet him in his general design of casting down all combined opposition to the kingdom of his Son; that God in his appointed time will bring forth the kingdom of the Lord Christ unto more glory and power, than in former days, I presume you are persuaded: whatever will be more, these six things are clearly promised.

1.) Fulness of peace unto the Gospel and the professors thereof: *Isa. xi. 6, 7. Chap. liv. 23. Isa. xxxiii. 20, 21. Rev. xxi. 25.*

2.) Purity and beauty of ordinances, and Gospel worship, *Rev. xi. 1. Chap. xxi. 5.* the tabernacle was wholly made by appointment, *Mal. iii. 3, 4. Zech. xiv. 16. Rev. xxi. 27. Zech. xiv. 23. Isa. xxxv. 8.*

3.) Multitudes of converts, many persons, yea nations: *Isa. lx. 7, 8. Chap. lvi. 8. Chap. xlix. 18, 19, 20, 21, 23. Rev. vii. 9.*

4.) The full casting out and rejecting of all will worship, and their attendant abominations, *Rev. xi. 2.*

5.) Professed subjection of the nations throughout the whole world unto the Lord Christ: *Dan. ii. 44. Chap. vii. last. Isa. lx. 6, 7, 8.* the kingdoms become, &c. amongst whom his appearance shall be so glorious, that *David* himself shall be said to reign.

6.) A most glorious and dreadful breaking of all that rise in opposition unto him: *Isa. lx. 12.* never such desolations, *Rev. xvi. 17, 18, 19.*

Now in order to the bringing in of this his rule and kingdom, with its attendencies, the Lord Christ goes forth in the first place to cast down the things that stand in his way, *dashing his enemies in pieces like a potters vessel*: this is a part of the design of providence, wherein we are to meet him in these days.

I shall speak a word, (1. unto them who are enabled to look through the clouds and darkness, whereby his paths are encompassed. (2. unto them who cannot.

(1. For the former, be you persuaded to meet the Lord in this his design, yet to continue steadfast in helping him against the mighty: I speak not only to you who are in authority, nor unto you to whom the sword is girded: but unto all that wish well to *Sion*. We have every one our mite that we may cast into this treasury: we may be all princes in this case, all *Israels*, preachers with God and men. There be three things whereby even you, who are but as the number, the common souldiers of Christ, may meet the Lord in this design.

1.] By faith; believe the promises, close with them, act faith upon them, and you will believe the beast unto destruction, antichrist into the pit, and magog to ruin; believe that "the enemies of Christ shall be made his footstool, that the nations shall be his inheritance, that he shall reign gloriously in beauty, that he shall smite in pieces the heads over divers nations; live in the faith of these things, and as it will give you the sweetness of them before they come, so it will hasten their coming beyond the endeavours of thousands, yea millions of armed men.

2.] Meet him with your supplications; cry unto him, as *Psal. xlv. 3, 4, 5. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee.* This will make you be the armies of heaven, that follow him in his great undertakings, *Rev. xix. 14.* it is his praying people, that are his conquering armies that follow him: now you find it coming, leave not pulling with all your strength, lest it roll back again, shoot



not two or three arrows, and so give over, but never leave shooting until the enemies of the Lord be all destroyed.

3.] Seeing it is his Gospel whose advancement the Lord Jesus aimeth at in all these dispensations, and whose quarrel alone he revengerth (whatever men may do) help on to the advancement of that Gospel of his, which as formerly it was oppressed by the height and tyranny of the tower of *Babel*, so for the present, is exceedingly defiled and cumbered by the rubbish of it being in some measure cast down.

4.] Whereas in these dispensations, it is most eminently and frequently in the praise of Christ, said, that he is just and righteous in all his ways, as you may see in all the acclamations of the saints upon the execution of his judgments on his enemies (*just and righteous art thou*) which is signally done on this account, because the ways whereby he doth it, are counted most unrighteous in the world, in this then also is he to be met, even in the administration of justice and judgment: you will otherwise certainly be found in a cross path unto him, and be borne down before him. This is that wisdom which he calls for among the judges of the earth, when he is set to reign on his holy hill, *Psal. ii. 10, 11.*

(2. I shall add one word or two unto them, who either from the darkness of the things themselves, or from the prejudices and temptations of their own spirits, are not able to discern the righteousness of the ways of God, but rather lift up themselves against him.

1.] Then consider the constant appearing of God against every party, that under any colour or pretence whatever have lifted up themselves for the reinforcement of things, as in former days, what colour or pretence soever they have put on, or which way soever they have turn'd themselves, God hath still appear'd against them: can you not discern his leavening their councils with folly and madness, weakening their hearts and hands, making the strong become as tow, and the successful a reproach? Though they have gone from mountain to mountain to seek for divination, and changed their pretences as often as *Laban* did *Jacob's* wages, yet they find neither fraud nor enchantment that will prevail: and doth not this proclaim, that the design which God had in hand, is as yet marvelously above you.

2.] Consider the constant answer of prayers which those which have waited on God in these dispensations, to their unspeakable consolations, have received; finding God to be nigh unto them in all that they call upon him for: if in this thing, *they regarded iniquity in their hearts, surely God would not have heard them*: others also cry, *even to the Lord do they cry*, but he will not bear witness to the abomination of their hearts: oh! that upon these and the like considerations, you would at last take the counsel of the Psalmist, *xvi. 10. Be still and know that he is God*: be silent before him for he is risen out of his holy habitation; say, *God hath done great things for these, who hath hardened himself against him; and prospered?* And this is the first particular.

(2.) The second design of providence in these dispensations, is evidently to *stain the glory of all flesh*; so *Isa. xxiii. 9.* never did the Lord any work more eminently, what sort of men is there amongst us, whose glory God hath not stained? I had rather leave this unto a silent thought, than to give you particular instances of it: otherwise it were very easy to make it as clear as the sun, that God hath left neither self honour nor glory to any of the sons of men: meet him then in this also.

1.) Cease putting confidence in man, say he is a *worm*, and the *son of man is but a worm, his breath is in his nostrils, and wherein is he to be accounted of?* this use doth the Church make of mercies, *Psal. xx. 6, 7.* some trust in horses, and some in chariots, but *we will remember the name of the Lord*: we will not trust in parliaments or armies, all flesh is grass, (*Isa. xl.*) let it have its withering time and away: see no wisdom but the wisdom of God, no strength but the strength of God, no glory but his.

2.) Have any of us any glory, any crowns, any gifts, any graces, any wisdom or valour, any useful endowments, let us cast them all down at the feet of Jesus Christ; if we look on them, if we keep them as our own, God withers all their beauty, all their glory: Thus do the *elders who worship the Lamb for ever*, *Rom. iv. 10, 11.* say to him, *Lord Jesus, thine is the glory*; thine are all the mighty works which have been wrought in our days; thine are all the means whereby they have been accomplished



accomplished; we are nothing, we can do nothing, thou art all, and in all: and this is the second.

[3.] He aims at the shaking of all these things here below: he is taking down the rate and price of all things here below, on that which was worth a thousand pounds, he takes his bill and writes down scarce the thousandth part: he hath laid his hand upon the nests of the nation, and hath fitted wings unto all their treasures; and so eminently written vanity and uncertainty on them all, as must needs lessen their esteem, were not men blinded by the god of this world: in this also are we to meet the Lord.

1.) By getting a low esteem of the things that God is thus shaking, and that upon this account, that he shakes them for this very end and purpose, that we should find neither rest nor peace in them: perhaps thou hast had a desire to be somebody in the world, thou seest thyself come short of what thou aimest at: say now with *Mephibosheth* upon the return of *David*, not only half, but let all go, seeing that the Lord Jesus shall reign with glory. A man may sometimes beat a servant, for the instruction of his son: God hath shaken the enjoyments of his enemies, to lead his friends to disesteem them: God forbid, the quite contrary should be found upon any of us.

2.) By labouring to find all riches and treasures in the Lord Christ: the earth staggers like a drunken man; the princes of it are reduced to a morsel of bread: all that is seen is of no value: doth not God direct us to the hidden paths, to the treasures that cannot be destroyed? many say, *Who will shew us any good?* Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

(2.) We are to meet the Lord in the way of his ordinances, in the way of Gospel worship, the exalting of the Lord Christ herein is the issue of all the mighty works of God: this is given in as the end of all, *Rev. xxi. 3. The tabernacles of God, &c.* after great shakings; the promise still is of a new heaven and earth, *Isa. lvi. 17. Rev. xxi. 1.* and this is that the people of God put themselves upon in the days wherein *Babylon* is to be destroyed, *Jer. l. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.* that is the work they then take in hand: the end of all is the building of the temple, *Ezek. xlvii.* and this is the conclusion that the people of God do make, *Isa. ii. 3, 4.* and if this be neglected, the Lord will say of us, as *David* of *Nabal*; *Surely in vain have I kept these men and all that they have:* to meet the Lord in this also:

[1.] Enquire diligently into his mind and will, that you may know his paths, and be acquainted with his statutes; I dare say, no temptation in the world presses with more colour and violence upon men under mercies, than that to a neglect of walking and holding communion with God in his ordinances: the Devil thinks thus to revenge himself of the Lord Jesus: his own yoke being broken, he thinks to prevail to the casting away of his: Christ hath a yoke though it be gentle and easy.

[2.] You that do enjoy holy ordinances, labour to have holy hearts answerable thereunto: you have heavenly institutions, labour to have heavenly conversations: if we be like the world in our walking, it is no great matter, if we be like the world in our worship: it is sad walking contrary to God in his own paths, shew out the power and efficacy of all Gospel institutions, in a frame of spirit, course of life, and equability of spiritual temper all your days.

[3.] Keep up the power of private worship, both personal and family. I have seen many good laws for the sabbath, and hope I shall see some good examples: look what the roots are in the family, such will the fruit be in the Church and common-wealth: if your spirits are not well manured there, you will be utterly barren elsewhere: that is done most clearly to God, which is done within doors.

(3.) Meet him in the way of his holiness; in the cry of the saints unto the Lord for the execution of his judgments and vengeance, they in an especial manner invoke his holiness: *Rev. vi. 10. How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* And in their rendring praises to him, they still make mention of his holiness and righteousness in all his ways. Though the ways of God are commonly traduced as unequal and unholy ways, yet in the close there is no property of his, that he will more vindicate in all his works, than that of his holiness; in this then we are also to meet the Lord in this day of our deliverance, the day wherein he hath wrought such great and wonderful alterations.



This use the Holy Ghost maketh upon such like dispensations, 2 Pet. iii. 11. *Seeing that all these things, &c. and so also, Heb. xii. 27, 28. And this word yet once more, signifieth the removing of these things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that these things which cannot be shaken, may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.* All things opposing removed, a freedom established, therefore let us have grace: God is the thrice holy one, holy in his nature, holy in his word, and holy in all his works, and he requires that his people be an holy people. To this he still urged his antient people, from the argument of his presence amongst them: oh that the spirit of the Lord would bring forth this one fruit of all his dealing with us, that we might be an holy people! If we put God's pure and clean mercies, into impure and unclean vessels, they will to us be defiled. Let us take heed of prostrating the mighty works of God to the service of our lusts. Should we now make such conclusions to ourselves, as the rich fool in the Gospel, and say, Well, we have now peace and prosperity laid up for some years, soul, take thy ease, eat, drink, and be merry, grow rich and great, follow after vanity, pride, folly, uncleanness, enjoy with delight the things which we have and heap up thereto. Why, as this is to labour to draw the Lord God into a partnership with our abominations, and to enforce his mighty works to bear witness to our lusts, so certainly it is such a frame, as he will surely and speedily revenge: the end why God delivers us from all our enemies, is, not that we may serve our lusts and ourselves without fear, but that we may serve him without fear in righteousness and holiness all the days of our lives: let then this be the issue upon our hearts, of all the victories, and successes, and returns of prayers, that we have received; that we give up ourselves to the Lord in all manner of holiness; this is that which the Lord's voice calls us unto: let not now him that is filthy be filthy still, let not him that is worldly be worldly still, let not him that is loose, and hath cast off the yoke of Christ, be so still: let not him that hath sought himself, do so still, let not him who hath contemned the institutions of Christ, do so still, let not him that hath been lifted up above his brethren, be so still, but let every one forsake his evil way, and the iniquity that is in his hand, that we who were not a people at all, may be a people to the praise of the God of all: that you who rule over men may be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord, that you may be as the light of the morning when the sun is risen, even as a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain: that we who are under rule, may set under our vines and figtrees, speaking well of the name of God, and labouring to carry on the kingdom of the Prince of peace, even every one as we are called, and abiding therein with God; that as when you sought this mercy of God which we rejoice in, in solemn humbling of yourselves before the Lord, I made it appear unto you, that it was the remnant of *Jacob*, God's secret and holy ones, lying in the bowels of the nation, that must be the rise of all our deliverances, so we would now every one strive to be of that number, for they alone enjoy the sweetness of this and every mercy.

SERMON



# \*S E R M O N XXXVIII.

The labouring Saint's dismission to rest.

A Sermon preached at the Funeral of the Right Honourable *Henry Ireton*, Lord deputy of *Ireland*.

To the Honourable and my very worthy friend Colonel *Henry Cromwell*.

S I R,



HE ensuing Sermon was preached upon as sad an occasion, as on any particular account hath been given to this nation in this our generation. It is now published, as at the desire of very many who love the favour of that perfume, which is diffused with the memory of the noble person peculiarly mentioned therein; so also upon the requests of such others, as enables me justly to entitle the doing of it, obedience. Being come abroad, it was in my thoughts to have directed it immediately in the first place to her, who of any individual person was most nearly concerned in him. But having observed how near she hath been to be swallowed up of sorrow, and what slow progress he, who took care to seal up instruction to her soul by all dispensations, hath given her hitherto towards a conquest thereof; I was not willing to offer directly a new occasion unto the multitude of her perplexed thoughts about this thing. No doubt, her loss being as great as it could be, upon the account of one subject to the law of mortality, as many grains of grief and sorrow are to be allowed her in the balance of the sanctuary, as God doth permit to be laid out and dispended about any of the sons of men. He who is able to make sweet the bitterest waters, and to give a gracious issue to the most grievous trial, will certainly, in due time, eminently bring forth that good upon her spirit, which he is causing all these things to work together for. In the mean time, Sir, these lines are to you: Your near relation

\* This Sermon was preached in the Abbey Church at Westminster, 6 February, 1691.



to that rare example of righteousness, faith, holiness, zeal, courage, self-denial, love to his country, wisdom, and industry, mentioned in the ensuing Sermon; the mutual tender affection between you, whilst he was living; your presence with him in his last trial and conflict; the deserved regard you bear to his worth and memory; your design of looking into, and following after his steps and purpose in the work of God in his generation, as such an accomplished pattern as few ages have produced the like; with many other reasons of the like nature, did easily induce me hereunto. That which is here printed is but the notes I first took, not having had leisure since to give them a serious perusal, and upon that account must beg a candid interpretation, unto any thing that may appear not so well digested therein, as might be expected. I have not any thing to express concerning your self, but only my desire that your heart may be fixed to the Lord God of your fathers, and that in the midst of all your temptations and oppositions, wherewith your pilgrimage will be attended, you may be carried on and established in your inward subjection unto, and outward contending for the kingdom of the dearly beloved of our souls, not fainting, or waxing weary, until you receive your dismissal to rest, for your lot in the end of the days.

S I R,

Oxon, Ch. Ch.  
April 2.*Your most humble**and affectionate Servant,***J. OWEN.**



## DAN. xii. 13.

*But go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest, and stand in the lot at the end of the days.*

**T**HE words of my text having no dependance (as to their sense and meaning, but only as to the occasion of them) on the *verses* foregoing, I shall not at all look backward into the *chapter*, but fall immediately upon them, that I be not hindred from my principal intendment: being unwilling to detain you long, though willing to speak a word from the Lord to such a congregation gathered together by such an eminent act of the providence of God.

The words are the Lord's dismissal given to a most eminent servant, from a most eminent imployment, wherein these four things are observable.

*First*, The dismissal it self in the first words: *Go thou thy ways.*

*Secondly*, The term allotted for his continuance under that dismissal: *Until the end be.*

*Thirdly*, His state and condition under that dismissal: *For thou shalt rest.*

*Fourthly*, The utmost issue of all this dispensation, both as to his foregoing labour, his dismissal, and rest following: *Stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*

*First*, In the first, I shall consider two things.

1. The person dismissed, *Thou.*

2. The dismissal it self, *Go thou thy ways.*

1. The person dismissed is *Daniel*, the writer of this prophecy, who received all the great visions of God mentioned therein, and I desire to observe concerning him as to our purpose in hand, two things.

(1.) His qualifications. (2.) His employment.

(1.) For the first, I shall only name some of them that were most eminent in him, and they are three.

[1.] Wisdom. [2.] Love to his people. [3.] Uprightness and righteousness in the discharge of that high place, whereunto he was advanced.

[1.] For the first, the Holy Ghost beareth ample testimony thereunto, *Dan. i. 17, 20. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the King enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers, that were in all his realm.* In all matters of wisdom and understanding none in the whole *Babylonian* empire, full of wise men and artists, were to be compared unto *Daniel* and his companions, and *Ezek. xxviii. 3.* rebuking the pride and arrogance of *Tyrus* with a bitter scorn, he says; *Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel, or thou thinkest thyself so, intimating that none in wisdom was to be compared unto him.*

[2.] Love to his people. On this account was his most diligent enquiry into the time of their deliverance, and his earnest contending with God upon the discovery of the season when it was to be accomplished, *Chap. ix. 1, 2, 3, 4.* Hence he is reckoned amongst them who in their generation stood in the gap, in the behalf of others, *Nash, Daniel, and Job.* Hence God calls the people of the *Jews*, *His people*, *Chap. ix. 24. Seventy weeks are determined on thy people*, the people of thy affections and desires, the people of whom thou art, and who are so dear unto thee.

[3.] For his righteousness in discharging of his trust and office, you have the joint testimony of God and man: his high place and preferment you have, *Chap. vi. 2.* he was the first of the three presidents who were set over the hundred and twenty other princes of the provinces; and the Holy Ghost tells you, that in the discharge of this high trust and great employment he was faithful to the utmost, *ver. 4. Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find none occasion nor fault: forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.* Which also his enemies confess, *ver. 3.*



*Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.*

These qualifications I say amongst others were most eminent in this person, who here received his dismissal from his employment.

(2.) There is his employment itself, from which he is dismissed, and herein I shall observe these two things.

[1.] The nature of the employment itself.

[2.] Some considerable circumstances of it.

[1.] For the first, it consisted in receiving from God, and holding out to others clear and express visions concerning God's wonderful providential alterations in kingdoms, and nations, which were to be accomplished, from the days wherein he lived, to the end of the world. All the prophets together had not so many clear discoveries, as this one *Daniel* concerning these things.

[2.] For the latter, this is observable, that all his visions still close with some eminent exaltation of the kingdom of Christ; that is the center where all the lines of his visions do meet, as is to be seen in the close almost of every *Chapter*, and this was the great intendment of the Spirit in all those glorious revelations unto *Daniel*, to manifest the subserviency of all civil revolutions unto the interest of the kingdom of the Lord Christ.

This then is the person concerning whom these words were used, and this was his employment.

2. There is his dismissal itself, *Go thou thy ways*. Now this may be considered two ways,

(1.) Singly, relating to his employment only.

(2.) In reference to his life also.

(1.) In the first sense, the Lord dischargeth *Daniel* from his farther attendance on him in this way of receiving visions and revelations, concerning things that were shortly to come to pass, although haply his portion might yet be continued in the land of the living: as if the Lord should say, Thou art an enquiring man, thou art still seeking for farther acquaintance with my mind in these things, but content thyself, thou shalt receive no more visions; I will now imploy *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and others, thou shalt receive no more; but I cannot close with this sense, for,

[1.] This is not the manner of God to lay aside those whom he hath found faithful in his service, men indeed do so, but God changeth not: whom he hath begun to honour with any employment, he continueth them in it, whilst they are faithful to him.

[2.] *Daniel* was now above an hundred years old, as may be easily demonstrated by comparing the time of his captivity, which was in the third year of the reign of *Jehoiakim*, chap. i. 1. with the time of his writing this prophecy, which is expressly said to be in the reign of *Cyrus*, the King of *Persia*, chap. x. 1. and therefore probably his end was very nigh; and after this you hear of him no more; who had he lived many days, it had been his sin not to have gone up to *Jerusalem*, the decree of *Cyrus* giving liberty for a return being passed.

(2.) It is not then God's laying him aside from his office simply, but also his intimation that he must shortly lay down his mortality, and so come into the condition wherein he was to rest until the end. This then is his dismissal, he died in his work, life and employment go together: *Go thou thy ways*.

*Observe*, I. There is an appointed season wherein the saints of the most eminent abilities, in the most useful employments, must receive their dismissal: be their work of never so great importance, be their abilities never so choice and eminent, they must in their season receive their dismissal.

Before I handle this proposition, or proceed to open the following words, I shall crave leave to bring the work of God, and the word of God a little close together, and lay the parallel between the persons dismissed, the one in our text, the other in a present providence, which is very near, only that the one lived not out half the days of the other.

1. Three personal qualifications we observed in *Daniel*, all which were very eminent in the person of our desires.

(1.) Wisdom. There is a manifold wisdom which God imparteth to the sons of men; there is spiritual wisdom, that by the way of eminency is said to be from



above, James iii. 17. which is nothing but the gracious acquaintance of the soul with the hidden wisdom of God in Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 7. and there is a civil wisdom or a sound ability of mind for the management of the affairs of men in subordination to the providence and righteousness of God. Though both these were in *Daniel*, yet it is in respect of the latter that his wisdom is so peculiarly extolled. And though I am very far from assuming to myself the skill of judging of the abilities of men, and would be far from holding forth things of mere common report, yet, upon assured grounds I suppose this gift of God, ability of mind, and dextrous industry for the management of humane affairs may be ascribed to our departed friend.

There are sundry things that distinguish this wisdom from that policy which God abhors, which is *carnal, sensual, and devilish*, James iii. 15. though it be the great darling of the men of the world; I shall name one or two of them.

[1.] A gracious discerning of the mind of God, according to his appearance in the affairs wherein men are employed, *Micah vi. 9. The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, the man of wisdom shall see thy name, hear the rod, and who hath appointed it.* It is the wisdom of a man, to see the name of God, to be acquainted with his will, his mind, his aim in things, when his providential voice crieth to the city. All the works of God have their voice, have their instruction: those of signal providences speak aloud, they cry to the city; Here is the wisdom of a man, he is a man of substance, a substantial man, that can see his name in such dispensations. This carnal policy enquires not into, but is wholly swallowed up in the concatenation of things among themselves, applying secondary causes unto events, without once looking to the name of God, like swine following acorns under the tree, not at all looking up to the tree from whence they fall.

[2.] Such acquaintance with the seasons of providence, as to know the duty of the people of God in them, 1 Chron. xii. 32. the children of *Issachar*, men that had understanding of the times, to know what *Israel* ought to do: this it is indeed to be a man of understanding, to know in any season the duty of *Israel*, that they may walk up to acceptance with God in the performance thereof. A thing which is neither prescribed in the rules, nor followed in the practice of men, wise only with that cursed policy which God abhors: to have a mind suited unto all seasons and tempers, so as to compass their own selfish ends, is the utmost of their aim.

Now in both these did this gift of God shine in this deceased saint.

1.) He ever counted it his wisdom to look after the name of God, and the testification of his will, in every dispensation of providence, wherein he was called to serve: for this were his wakings, watchings, enquiries; when that was made one, he counted not his business half done, but even accomplished, and that the issue was ready at the door; not what saith this man, or what saith that man, but what saith the Lord? that being evident; he consulted not with flesh and blood, and the wisdom of it, whereof perhaps, would he have leaned to it, he was as little destitute as any in his generation, I mean the whole wisdom of a man. The name of God was as land in every storm, in the discovery whereof, he had as happy an eye at the greatest seeming distance when the clouds were blackest, and the waves highest, as any.

2.) Neither did he rest here: what *Israel* ought to do in every season, was also his enquiry; some men have a wisdom to know things, but not seasons in any measure; surely a thing in season is no less beautiful, than a word in season: as apples of Gold in pictures of silver: there are two things that belong to civil affairs, but are alterable upon the incomprehensible variety of circumstances. These alter and change the very nature of them, and make them good or bad, that is, useful or destructive. He that will have the garment that was made for him one year, serve and fit him the next, must be sure that he neither increase nor wane. Importune insisting on the most useful things, without respect to alterations of seasons, is a sad sign of a narrow heart. He of whom we speak, was wise to discern the seasons, and performed things, when both themselves, and the ways of carrying them on were excellently suited unto all coincidences of their season. And indeed, what is most wisely proposed in one season, may be most foolishly pursued in another. It had been wisdom in *Joshua* not to have made any compact, but to have slain all the *Gibeonites*; but it was a folly sorely revenged in *Saul*, who attempted to do the same. He who thinks the most righteous and suitable proposals or principles, that ever were in the world (setting aside general rules of unchang-



able righteousness, and equity compassing all times, places, ways and forms of government) must be perform'd as desirable, because once they were so, is certainly a stranger to the affairs of humane kind.

Some things are unchangeable and indispensable amongst men, supposing them to live answerable to the general principle of their kind: as a that Government must be, without which every one is the enemy of every one, and all tend to mutual destruction, which are appointed of God for mutual preservation, that in Government some do rule, and some be in subjection, that all rule be for the good of them that are ruled, and the like principles that flow necessarily from the very nature of political society.

Some things again are alterable and dispensible, merely upon the account of preserving the former principles, or the like: if any of them are out of course, it is a vacuum in nature politick, for which all particular elements instantly dislodge and transpose themselves to supply, and such are all forms of governments amongst men, which if either they so degenerate of themselves that they become directly opposite, or are so shattered by providential revolutions as to become useless to their proper end, may and ought to be changed, and not upon other accounts: but now for other things in government, as the particular way, whereby persons shall be designed unto it, the continuance of the same persons in it, for a less or a greater proportion of time, the exercise of more or less power by some sorts, or the whole body of them that are ruled, the uniting of men for some particular end by bonds and engagements, and the like occasional emergencies, the universal disposal of them is roll'd on prudence to act according to present circumstances.

(2.) Love to his people. This was the second qualification, wherein *Daniel* was so eminent. And our deceased friend, not to enter into comparison with them that went before, had clearly such a proportion, as we may heartily desire that those who follow after, may drink but equal draughts of the same cup; that as his pains, labour, travel, jeopards of his life, and all that was dear to him, relinquishment of relations and contentments, had sweetness and life from this motive, even intenseness of affection to his people, the people of whom he was, and whose prosperity he did desire, needs no farther demonstration, than the great neglect of self and all self-concernments which dwelt upon him in all his tremendous undertakings: *vicit amor patriæ*, or certainly he who had upon his breast and all his undertakings self-contempt so eminently engraven, could not have persisted wrestling with so many difficulties to the end of his days: it was *Jerusalem*, and the prosperity thereof, which was prefer'd to his chief joy. Neither,

(3.) Did he come short in righteousness in the administration of that high place whereto he was called: nay than this, there was not a more eminent stone in that *Diadem* which he had in the earth. If he lay not at the bottom, yet at least he had a signal concurrence in such acts of justice, as antiquity hath not known, and posterity will admire. Neither was it this or that particular act that did in this bespeak his praise, but a constant will and purpose of rendring to every one his due.

I shall not insist upon particulars, in these and sundry other personal qualifications, between the persons mentioned a parallel may lie.

2. As to employment, that of *Daniel* was mentioned before: it was the receiving, and holding out from God, visions of providential alterations, disposing and transposing of states, nations, kingdoms, and dominions; what he had in speculation, was this man's part to follow in action, he was an eminent instrument in the hand of God in as tremendous providential alterations, as such a spot of the world hath at any time received, since *Daniel* foresaw in general them all: and this, not as many have been carried along with the stream, or led by outward motives, and considerations far above their own principles and desires, but seeingly and knowingly, he closed with the mind of God with full purpose of heart, to serve the will of the Lord in his generation. And on this account did he see every mountain made a plain beforehand, by the spirit of the Lord, and staggered not at the greatest difficulties through unbelief, but being steadfast in faith, he gave glory to God. And to compleat the parallel, as *Daniel's* visions were still terminated in the kingdom of Christ; so all his actions had the same aim and intendment. This was that which gave life and sweetness to all the most dismal and black engagements that at



any time he was called out unto. All made way to the coming in of the promised glory. It was all the *vengeance of the Lord and his temple*. A *Davidical* preparation of his paths in blood, that he might for ever reign in righteousness and peace; but be he so or so, the truth of our proposition is confirmed towards him: That there is an appointed season when the saints of the most eminent abilities in the most useful employments shall receive their dismissal, &c.

I shall briefly open the rest of the words, and so take up the proposition again, which was first laid down.

*Secondly* Then, there is the term allotted to him in this state of his dismissal: *Until the end be*.

Three things may be here intended in this word *end*.

1. The end of his life: *Go thou thy ways to the end of thy life*, and days. But this we before disallowed, not consenting that *Daniel* received a dismissal from his employment before the end of his life and pilgrimage.

2. The end of the world: *Go thy ways to the end of the world*: 'till then thou shalt rest in thy grave. But neither yet doth this seem to be particularly intended in these words. The words in the close of the text do expressly mention that, calling it the *end of the days*; and in so few words, the same thing is not needlessly repeated: besides, had this expression held out the whole time of his abode in the state of rest here signified, it must have been, *Go thou thy ways, for thou shalt rest until the end be*: So that,

3. The *end* here is to be accommodated unto the things, whereof the Holy Ghost is peculiarly dealing with *Daniel*; and that is the accomplishment of the great visions which he had received, in breaking the kingdoms of the world, and setting up the kingdom of the holy one of God: *Daniel* is dismissed from farther attendance in this service, he shall not see the actual accomplishment of the things mentioned, but is dismissed and laid aside unto the end of them. The word *until*, in the Scripture is not such a limitation of time, as to assert the contrary to what is excepted, upon his accomplishment: *until the end*, doth not signify that he should not rest after the end of the things intimated, no more than it is affirmed that *Michal* had children after her death, because it is said, that until her death she had none, 2 Sam. vi. 23, this then is that end that he is dismissed unto; the appointed season for the accomplishment of those glorious things which he had foretold.

*Observ. II.* God oftentimes suffers not his choicest servants to see the issue and accomplishment of these glorious things, wherein themselves have been most eminently engaged.

*Thirdly*, The third thing (that we may make haste) is his state and condition, during the time which he lies under this dismissal, in these words: *For thou shalt rest*.

There is nothing of difficulty in these words, but what will naturally fall under consideration in the opening of the proposition which they hold out: which is,

*Observ. III.* The condition of a dismissed saint is a condition of rest: *Thou shalt rest until the end be*.

What this rest is, and from what, with wherein it consists, shall be afterwards explained.

*Fourthly*, The last thing in the text is the utmost issue of all these dispensations, both as to his foregoing labour, and his present dismissal, and following rest: *Thou shalt stand in thy lot, &c.*

Here are two things considerable in these words.

1. The season of the accomplishment of what is here foretold, and promised unto *Daniel*; and that is *in the end of the days*: that is, when time shall be no more, when a period shall be put to the days of the world: called the *last day*, the *great day*, the *day of judgment*; that is the season of the accomplishment of this promise, *The day wherein God will judge the world, by the man whom he hath ordained*.

*Observ. IV.* There is an appointed determinate season, wherein all things and persons according to the will of God will run into their utmost issue and everlasting condition.

2. The thing foretold, and promised, that is, *That he should stand in his lot*.

*Observ. V.* There is an appointed lot for every one to stand in, and measured portion, which in the end they shall receive.



*Observ. VI.* There is an eminent lot hereafter, for men of eminent employment for God here.

I shall not be able to handle all these several truths which lie in the words; those only which are of most importance, and most suitable, may briefly be handled unto you. And the first is,

*Observ. I.* There is an appointed season wherein the saints of the most eminent abilities, in the most useful employments must receive their dismissal.

*Zech. i. 5.* *Your fathers where are they? and the prophets do they live forever?* Fathers and prophets have but their season, and they are not: they have their dismissal; so old *Simeon* professeth, *Nunc Dimittis*, *Luke ii. 29.* Now thou givest me a *dismissal*: they are placed of God in their station, as a centinel in his watch-tower, and they have their appointed season, and are then dismissed from their watch. The great Captain of their salvation comes, and saith, *Go thou thy ways*, thou hast faithfully discharged thy duty; go now unto thy rest. Some have harder service: some have harder duty than others: some keep guard in the winter, a time of storms and temptations, trials and great pressures: others in the sun-shine, the summer of a more flourishing estate and condition; yet duty they all do; all attend in the service; all endure some hardship, and have their appointed season for their dismissal: and be they never so excellent at the discharging of their duty, they shall not abide one moment beyond the bounds which he hath set them, who saith to all his creatures, *Thus far shall you go, and no farther.* Oftentimes this dismissal is in the midst of their work, for which they seem to be most eminently qualified.

The three most eminent works of God, in and about his children, in the days of old, were his giving his people the law, and setting them in the land of *Canaan*: his recovering them from the *Babylonish captivity*; and, his promulgation of the Gospel unto them. In these three works, he employed three most eminent persons; *Moses* in the first, *Daniel* in the second, and *John Baptist* in the third, and neither of them saw the work accomplished, wherein they were so eminently employed. *Moses* died the year before the people entered *Canaan*: *Daniel*, some few years before the foundation of the temple, and *John Baptist* in the first year of the baptism of our Saviour, when the Gospel which he began to preach, was to be published in its beauty and glory. They had all but their appointed seasons, though their abilities were eminent: who like unto them, and their employment excellent, what like it in the earth? Yet at their seasons, they must go their ways to rest, and lie down, *till they stand in their lot at the end of the days.* The reasons of which are,

1. The general condition of their mortality doth require that it should be so: *It is appointed to all men once to die*, *Heb. ix. 27.* There is a stable law fixed concerning the sons of men, that is not upon the account of any usefulness here to be dispensed withal, *The number of our months are with God; he hath fixed our bounds, which we shall not pass*: our days are as the days of an hireling, that have a certain, prefixed, and determinate end: their strength is not the strength of stones, neither is their flesh of brass, that they should endure forever: See *Job xiv. 10, 11, 12.* This, I say, requires that there should be an appointed season for their employment, for it is so for their lives: and yet there is more in it than this: for in the course of five thousand years, God hath exempted two persons by his sovereignty from the condition of mortality, who walked with him in their generations. So that the bounds fixed to them were not upon the account of their lives, but merely of the work they had in hand.

2. God doth it, that he may be the more eminently seen in the carrying on his own works, which in their season he commits to them. Should he leave his work always on one hand, it would seem at length to be the work of the instrument only. Though the people opposed *Moses* at the first, yet it is thought they would have worshiped him at the last: and therefore God buried him where his body could not be found. Yet indeed he had but the lot of most, who faithfully serve God in their generations: despised whilst they are present, idolized when they are gone. I do not know of any great work, that the Lord carried out the same persons to be the beginners and enders of. He gave them all their seasons, that his power and wisdom might the more evidently appear in carrying it from one hand to another.

3. God



3. God makes room as it were in his vineyard, for the budding, flourishing, and fruit-bearing of other plants which he hath planted. Great employments call for great exercise of graces. Even in employments in and about providential things, there is the exercise of spiritual grace: as much faith and prayer, as much communion with God, walking before him, and wrestling with him, may be used in casting down of armies, as in setting up of Churches: God exerciseth all the graces of his, in the work he calleth them out unto. He principles them by faith and fellowship with himself for their employment; and therefore he gives each individual but his appointed season, that others in whose hearts he hath lodged the same spirit wherewith they are endued, may come forth, and shew the fruits thereof. *Daniel* lieth down in the dust, in rest and peace, and why so? The spirit of prophecy is poured out on *Haggai* and *Zechariah*, &c. they must also carry on this work, and *bear my name before my people*. Consider the use of this.

*Use 1.* Of exhortation unto all that are employed in the work of God, especially such as with eminent abilities are engaged in eminent employments, you have but your allotted season for your work: your day hath its close, its evening: your night cometh, wherein none can work: *The grave cannot praise the Lord, death cannot celebrate him, it's the living, the living that are fitted for that work*, *Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19.* It is true, men may allot you your season, and all in vain, but your times are in the hand of God; that which he hath appointed out unto you shall stand; be you never so excellent, never so useful, yet the days of your service *are as the days of an hireling*, that will expire at the appointed season: be wise then to improve the time that is in your hands; this is the praise of a man, the only praise whereof in this world he is partaker, that he doth the will of God, before he fall asleep: that he faithfully serves his generation, until he be no more. For a dying man to wrestle with the rebukes of God, and the complaints of his own conscience, for meeting with the end of his days, before he hath attained the midst of his duty, is a sad condition. You have your season, and you have but your season, neither can you lie down in peace, until you have some persuasion that your work as well as your life is at an end; whatever then you find to do, do it with all your strength, for there is neither wisdom nor power in the grave whither you are going, *Ecclesiastes ix. 10.*

Some particular rules may direct you herein.

(1.) Compare yourselves with the saints of God, who were faithful in their generations, and are now fallen asleep; what a deal of work did *Josiah* do in a short season? what a light did *John* set up in a few years? with what unwearied pains and industry did our deceased friend serve his generation? It is said of *Cesar*, that he was ashamed of his own sloth, when he found that *Alexander* had conquered the eastern world, at the age wherein he had done nothing. Behold here, one receiving his dismissal about the age of forty years, and what a world of work for God, and the interest of the Lord Christ did he in that season? and how well in the close, hath he parted with a temporal life for him, who by his death procured for him an eternal life, and now rest is sweet unto this labouring man. Provoke one another by examples.

(2.) Be diligent to pass through your work, and let it not too long hang upon your hands. Your appointed season may come before you bring it to the close; yea search out work for God. You that are intrusted in power, trifle not away your season. Is there no oppressed person that with diligence you might relieve? is there no poor distressed widow or orphan, whose righteous requests you might expedite and dispatch? are there no stout offenders against God and man that might be chastized? are there no slack and slow counties and cities in the execution of justice, that might be quickened by your example? No places destitute of the Gospel that might be furnished and supplied by your industry and wisdom? can you not find out something of this or the like nature to be dispatched with vigour and diligence? nay do not innumerable particulars in each kind lie upon your hands? and is not your nonperformance of them such a sacrifice as wherewith God is not well pleased? Your time is limited and appointed, you know not how soon you may be overtaken with it; and would it not be desirable unto you, that you had done these things? will it be bitterness in the end, that you so laid out your endeavours?

*Use 2.*



*Use 2.* All men have but their seasons in any work, only God abideth in it for ever: in every undertaking let your eye still be on him, with whom is the fulness and the residue of the spirit. *Jeremiah's* great bewailing of *Josiah's* death was doubtless made upon the account of his discerning that none would come after him to carry on the work which he had begun, but the wickedness of that people was to come to their height; else God can raise up yet more *Josiahs*: let him be eyed as the principal and only abiding agent in any great undertaking.

In the residue of the *observations* I shall be very brief. The next is,  
*Obs. II.* God oftentimes suffers not the choicest of his servants to see the accomplishment of those glorious things, wherein themselves have been most eminently engaged.

The case of *Moses* is most eminently known, he had a large share in suffering the persecutions which were allotted to the people: forty years banishment he endured in the wilderness, under the reproach of Christ, forty years more spent in wrestling with innumerable difficulties, dangerous perils, mutinies, wars, and contentions. At the close when he comes to look upon the land, when the end of all that dispensation was to be wound up, and the rest and reward of all his toil and labour to be had, which formerly he had undergone for twice forty years; *Go thou thy ways*, saith the Lord, *thou shalt rest*, take thy dismissal, thou shalt not enter into the good land, lie down here in the wilderness in peace.

*John Baptist* goes and preaches the drawing nigh of the kingdom of God, but lived only to point out Christ with his finger, cries, *Behold the Lamb of God*, I must decrease, and is cut off. *David* makes the great preparation for the temple, but he shall not see so much as the foundation laid. Men must take their appointed lot. *God will send by the hand of him whom he will send.* *Daniel must rest until the end be.* It is said of some they began to deliver *Israel*. The case of *Zerubbabel* was very rare, who saw the foundation, and also the top-stone of the temple laid, and yet the work of *Jerusalem* was not half finished in his days, as you may see, *Zech. i.* And this because,

1. God oftentimes receives secret provocations from the choicest of his servants, which moves him to take them short of their desires. Those of his own whom he employs in great works, have great and close communion with him. God usually exercises their spirits in near acts of fellowship with himself: they receive much from him, and are constrained to unburden themselves frequently upon him; now when men are brought into an intimacy with God, and have received great engagements from him, the Lord takes notice of every working and acting of their souls in an especial manner, and is oftentimes grieved and provoked with that in them which others can take no notice of: let a man read the story of that action of *Moses*, upon which the Lord told him directly he should not see the finishing of the work he had in hand, nor enter into *Canaan*, *Numb. xx. 7, 8, 11.* It will be a hard matter to find out wherein the failing was: he smote the rock with the rod, with some words of impatience, when he should only have spoken to it, and this with some secret unbelief, as to the thing he had in hand: God deals with others visibly, according to their outward actions, but in his own he takes notice of all their unbelief, fears, withdrawals, as proceeding from a frame in no measure answering those gracious discoveries of himself, which he hath made unto them, and on this account it is, that some are taken off in the midst of their work.

2. To manifest that he hath better things in store for his saints than the best and utmost of what they can desire or aim at here below. He had a heaven for *Moses*, and therefore might in love and mercy deny him *Canaan*. He employeth some eminently, their work is great, their end glorious, at the very last step almost of their journey, he takes off one and another, lets them not see the things aimed at: this may be thought hard measure, strict severity, exact justice, yea, as *Job* complains, *taking advantages against them*; see but what he calls them to, in calling them off from their greatest glories and excellencies on the earth, and all this will appear to be love, tenderness, and favour in the highest. Whilst you are labouring for a handful of first fruits, he gives you the full harvest; whilst you are labouring for the figure here below, he gives you the substance above. Should you see the greatest work, wherein any of you were ever engaged, brought to perfection, yet all were but a few drops



drops compared with that fulness which he hath prepared for you. The Lord then doth it to witness to the children of men, that the things which are seen, the best of them, are not to be compared with the things that are not seen, yea, the least of them, in as much as he takes them whom he will honour, from the very door of the one, to bear them into the other. The meanest enjoyment in heaven is to be preferred before the richest on earth, even then when the kingdom of Christ shall come in most beauty and glory.

*Use 1.* You that are engaged in the work of God, seek for a reward of your service in the service itself. Few of you may live to see that beauty and glory which perhaps you aim at as the end of all your great undertakings for God, whereinto you have been engaged. God will proceed his own pace, and calls on us to go along with him, and in the mean time, until the determinate end come, to wait in faith, and not make haste. Those whose minds are so fixed on, and swallowed up with some end (though good) which they have proposed to themselves, do seldom see good days, and serene in their own souls, they have bitterness, wrath, and trouble all their days; are still pressing to the end proposed, and commonly are dismissed from their station before it be attained. There is a sweetness, there is wages to be found in the work of God itself: men who have learned to hold communion with God in every work he calls them out unto, though they never see the main harvest they aim at in general, yet such will rest satisfied, and submit to the Lord's limitation of their time: they bear their own sheaves in their bosoms. Seeing God oftentimes dismisses his choicest servants, before they see, or taste of the main fruits of their endeavours; I see not upon what account consolation can be had in following the Lord in difficult dispensations, but only in that reward which every duty bringeth along with it, by communion with God in its performance. Make then this your aim, that in sincerity of heart, you do the work of God in your generation: find his presence with you, his spirit guiding you, his love accepting you, in the Lord Christ, and whenever you receive your dismissal, it will be rest and peace, in the mean time, you will not make haste.

*Use 2.* See a bottom and ground of consolation, when such eminent instruments as this departed worthy, are called off from their station when ready to enter upon the harvest of all their labours, watchings, toils, and expence of blood, God hath better things for them in store, abiding things, that they shall not enjoy for a day or two, which is the best of what they could hope for here, had they lived to see all their desires accomplished; but such as in the fulness whereof, they may lie down in peace to eternity. Why do we complain? for our own loss? is not the residue and fulness of the spirit with him, who gave him his dismissal? for his loss, he lived not to see *Ireland* in peace, but enjoys the glory of that eternal kingdom that was prepared for him before the foundation of the world, which is the condition held out in the third observation.

*Observ. III.* The condition of a dismissed saint is a condition of rest, *Go thy way until the end be; for thou shalt rest.*

The Apostle gives it in as the issue of a discourse from a passage in the *Psalms*, *There remaineth therefore a rest unto the people of God*, Heb. iv. 9. it remains, and is reserved for them, this the Lord hath solemnly proclaimed from heaven, *Rev. xiv. 13. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.* they go into a blessed condition of rest; there is not any notion under which the state of a dismissed saint is so frequently described as this *of rest*, which indeed is the proper end and tendency of all things; their happiness is their rest; their rest is all the happiness they can be partakers of: *Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, & inquietum est cor nostrum, donec veniat ad te.*

Now *rest* holds out two things unto us: A freedom from what is opposite thereunto, wherein those that are at rest have been exercised, in reference whereunto they are said to be at rest; and something which suits them, and satisfies their nature in the condition wherein they are; and therefore they are at rest, which they could not be, were it not so with them; for nothing can rest, but in the full fruition and enjoyment of that which satiates the whole nature of it in all its extent and capacity. We must briefly enquire,

(1.) What it is that the saints are at rest from: and

5 K

(2.) What



(2.) What it is that they are at rest in. Which I shall do very speedily.

(1.) The many particulars which they are at rest from may be referred unto two general heads: [1.] Sin. [2.] Labour and travel.

[1.] Sin; this, on all consideration whatever, is the main disquietness of the soul; temptations to it, actings in it, troubles for it, they are the very *Egypt* of the soul, its house and place of bondage and vexation; either the power of it indwelling, or the guilt of it pressing, are here still disquieting the soul. For the first, how doth *Paul* complain, lament, yea cry out concerning it, *Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am!* and what a sad, restless, and tumultuating condition upon this account doth he describe in the *verses* foregoing? The best, the wisest, the holiest of the saints on this account, are in a restless condition. Suppose a man a conqueror in every battle, in every combat that he is engaged in, yet whilst he hath any fighting, though he be never foiled, yet he hath not peace. Though the saints should have success in every engagement against sin, yet because it will still be rebelling, still be fighting, it will disturb their peace. So also doth the guilt of it; our Saviour testifieth, that a sense of it will make a man to be *weary and heavy laden*, *Mat. xi. 28.* This oftentimes makes the inhabitants of *Sion* say they are sick; for though an end be made of sin as to the guilt of it in the blood of Christ, yet by reason of our darkness, folly, and unbelief, and the hiding of the countenance of God, the conscience is oftentimes pressed with it, no less than if it lay indeed under the whole weight and burden of it.

I shall not instance in more particulars concerning this cause of want of rest, and disquietness, the perplexity of temptations, buffetings and winnowings of Satan, allurements and affrightments of the world, darkness and sorrows of unbelief, and the like, do all set in against us upon this account.

This in general is the first thing that the dismissed saints are at rest from: they sin no more, they wound the Lord Jesus no more, they trouble their own souls no more, they grieve the spirit no more, they dishonour the Gospel no more, they are troubled no more with Satan's temptations without, no more with their own corruption within, but lie down in a constant enjoyment of one everlasting victory over sin, with all its attendants: saith the spirit, *They rest from their labours*, *Rev. xiv.* those labours which make them faint and weary, their contending with sin to the uttermost; they are no more cold in communion, they have not oft thought that wanders off from God to eternity: they lose him no more, but always lie down in his bosom without the least possibility of disturbance. Even the very remembrance of sin is sweet unto them, when they see God infinitely exalted, and admitted in the pardon thereof. They are free from trouble, and that both as to doing, and suffering: few of the saints but are called out in one kind or another to both these. Every one is either doing for God, or suffering for God, some both do and suffer great things for him: in either of them there is pain, weariness, travel, labour, trouble, sorrow, and anxiety of spirit; neither is there any eminent doing or working for God, but is carried on with much suffering to the outward man.

What a life of labour and trouble did our deceased friend lead for many years in the flesh: how were his days consumed in travel! God calling him to his foot, and exercising him to understand the sweetness of that promise, that they that die in him, shall have rest: many spend their days deliciously, with so much contentment to the flesh, that it is impossible they should have any foretaste and sweet wish of their rest that is to come.

The Apostle tells us that there remains a rest for the people of God; and yet without, that they who believe are entered into that rest; those who in their labours, in their travels do take in the sweetness of that promise of rest, do even in their labour make an entrance thereinto.

[2.] They rest from all trouble and anxiety that attend them in their pilgrimage, either in doing or suffering for God. *Heb. iv. 10. They enter into rest, and cease from their work;* God wipes all tears from their eyes, there is no more watching, no more fasting, no more wrestling, no more fighting, no more blood, no more sorrow, the ransomed of the Lord do return with everlasting joy on their heads, and sorrow and sighing fly away. Their tyrants pretend no more title to their kingdom; rebels lie not in wait for their blood; they are no more awakened by the sound of the trumpet, nor the noise of the instruments of death: they fear not for their re-

lations,



lations, they weep not for their friends, the Lamb is their temple, and God is all in all unto them. Yet

(2.) This will not compleat their rest, something farther is required thereto: even something to satisfy, everlastingly content and fill them in the state and condition wherein they are. Free them in your thoughts from what you please, without this they are not at rest. This then you have in the second place, God is the rest of their souls, *Psal. cxvi. Return to thy rest, O my soul.* Dismissed saints rest in the bosom of God, because in the fruition and enjoyment of him they are everlastingly satisfied, as having attained the utmost end whereto they were created, all the blessedness whereof they are capable. I could almost beg for liberty a little to expatiate in this meditation of the sweet, gracious, glorious, satisfied condition of a dismissed saint. But the time is spent, and therefore without holding out one drop of water to quench the feigned fire of purgatory, or drawing forth any thing to discover the vanity of their assertion, who affirm the soul to sleep, or to be nothing until the resurrection; or theirs who assigning to them a state of subsistence and perception, do yet exclude them from the fruition of God, without which there is no rest, until the end of all, with such other by-persuasions, as would disquiet the condition, or abridge the glory of those blessed souls, which yet were a facile undertaking, I shall draw towards a close.

There are three points yet remaining, I shall speak only to the first of them, and that as an use of the doctrine last proposed, and I have done.

*Observ. IV.* There is an appointed determinate season, wherein all things and persons, according to the will of God, will run into their utmost issue and everlasting condition.

Thou art going, whoever thou art, into an abiding condition, and there is a lot appointed for thee, wherein lies an estate everlastingly unchangeable. It is the utmost end whereunto thou art designed, and when once thou art entred into that lot, thou art everlastingly engaged: no more change, no more alteration, if it be well with thee, it will abide; if otherwise, expect not any relief. In our few days we live for eternity, in our mutable estate we deal for an unchangeable condition. It is not thus only in respect of particulars, but God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge all the world by the man whom he hath ordained. An end is coming unto all that whole dispensation under which we are. To you who by the riches of free grace have obtained union and communion with the Lord Jesus, rest and peace, when God shall everlastingly rain snares, fire and brimstone upon the workers of iniquity. Some mock indeed, and say, *Where is the promise of his coming?* But we know, the Lord is not slack, as some men count slackness, but exerciseth patience until the appointed season for the bringing about of his own glorious ends, which he hath determined concerning his creatures. Why should we then complain, when any one, perhaps before our expectation, but yet according to God's determination, makes an entrance into the end of all? All things work to that season. This state of things is not for continuance. That which is incumbent, is in this uncertain space of time allotted to us, to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, as also to serve the Lord faithfully in our generations, wherein we cannot be surprised: we have an example in him who is gone before; it is true, the Lord Jesus is our primitive pattern and example: but those also who have followed him, wherein they have followed him, are to be eyed and marked as provocations to the same labour of faith and love, wherein they were exercised. And that this use may be made by this assembly, I shall add one word concerning him from whom is the occasion thereof.

Every man stands in a threefold capacity: Natural: Civil: Religious. And there are distinct qualifications that are suited unto these several capacities.

1. To the first as the ornaments and perfections of nature, are suited some seeds of those heroical virtues, as courage, permanency in business, &c. which being in themselves morally indifferent, have their foundations eminently laid in the natures of some persons, which yet hinders not, but that their good improvement is of grace.

2. To the second, or man's civil capacity, there are many eminencies relating as peculiar endowments, which may be referred unto the three heads of ability, faithfulness, and industry, that through them neither by weakness, treachery, nor sloth the



the works and employments incumbent on men in their civil state and condition may suffer.

3. Mens peculiar ornament and improvement in their religious capacity, lies in those fruits of the spirit which we call Christian graces: of these in respect of usefulness, there are three most eminent, viz. faith, love, and self-denial. I speak of them upon another account than the Apostle doth, where he placeth hope amongst the first three of Christian graces. Now all these in their several kinds were as eminent in the person deceased in his several capacities, as perhaps is usually found in any one in a generation. My business is not to make a funeral oration, only I suppose that without offence I may desire, that in courage and permanency in business (which I name in opposition to that unsettled, pragmatical, shuffling disposition which is in some men) in ability for wisdom and counsel, in faithfulness to his trust, and in his trust, in indefatigable industry in the pursuit of the work committed to him, in faith on the promises of God, and acquaintance with his mind in his mighty works of providence, in love to the Lord Jesus and all his saints, in a tender regard to their interest, delight in their society, contempt of himself and all his for the Gospel's sake, with eminent self-denial in all his concernments, in impartiality and sincerity in the execution of justice, that in these and the like things we may have many raised up in the power and spirit wherein he walked before the Lord, and the inhabitants of this nation. This (I say) I hope I may speak without offence here upon such an occasion as this; my business being occasionally to preach the word, not to carry on a part of a funeral ceremony. I shall add no more, but commit you to him, who is able to prepare you for your eternal condition.



## \* S E R M O N XXXIX.

Christ's Kingdom and the Magistrate's Power.



DAN. vii. 15, 16.

*I Daniel was grieved in my spirit, in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near to one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this: so he told me, and made me to know the interpretation of the things.*



**W**HAT there is of concernment for the right understanding of these words, in that part of the *Chapter* which goes before, may be considered in the opening of the words themselves, and therefore I shall immediately attend thereunto.

There are in them four things considerable.

*First*, The state and condition which *Daniel*, the penman of this prophecy, expresseth himself to be in, wherein he hath companions in the days wherein we live: *He was grieved in his spirit in the midst of his body.*

*Secondly*, The cause and means whereby he was brought into this perplexed frame of spirit: *The visions of his head troubled him.*

\* This Sermon was preached to the Parliament, Oct. 13, 1652. being a day of solemn Humiliation.

*Thirdly,*



*Thirdly*, The remedy he used for his delivery from that intangled condition of spirit wherein he was: *He went nigh to one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this.*

*Fourthly*, The issue of that application he made to that one, that stood by for redress: *He told him, and made him know the interpretation of the things.*

All these I shall briefly open unto you, that I may lay a foundation for the truth which the Lord hath furnished me with, to hold out unto you this day.

*First*, In the first, the person spoken of is *Daniel* himself: *I Daniel*. He bears this testimony concerning himself, and his condition was: *He was grieved in his spirit.*

The person himself was a man highly favoured of God, above all in his generation: so richly furnished with gifts and graces, that he is once and again brought forth as an example, and instanced in by God himself, upon the account of eminence in wisdom and piety. Yet all this preserves him not from falling into this perplexed condition, *Dan. i. 17, 20. Ez. ix. 24. Chap. xxviii. 3.* Now as the principal work of all the holy prophets, which have been since the world began (*Luke i. 70. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12.*) was to preach, set forth, and declare the Lord Jesus Christ, the *Messias*, who was for to come; so some especial concerns of his person, righteousness, and kingdom, were in especial manner committed unto them respectively. His passion and righteousness to *Isaiah*, the covenant of grace in him to *Jeremiah*, and to this *Daniel* most eminently the great works of the providence of God, in the shaking and overturning of kingdoms and nations, in a subserviency to his kingdom; with the revelation hereof for the consolation of the Church in all ages, did the Lord honour him of whom we speak.

For the present he describes himself in somewhat a perplexed condition. His spirit (mind and soul) *was grieved, sick, troubled, or disquieted in the midst of his body*; that is, deeply, nearly, closely: it sets out the greatness of his trouble, the anxiety of his thoughts within him: like *David* when he expostulated with his soul about it. *Why art thou so sad, my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me?* *Psal. xliii. 5:* he knew not what to say, what to do, nor wherewith to relieve himself. He was filled with sad thoughts, sad apprehensions of what was to come to pass, and what might be the issue of the things that had been discovered unto him. This, I say, is the frame and temper he describes himself to be in: a man under sad apprehensions of the issues and events of things, and the dispensations of God, as many are at this day: and upon that account closely, and nearly perplexed.

*Secondly*, The cause of this perturbation of mind and spirit was from the visions of his head: *The visions of his head troubled him.*

He calls them *visions of the head*, because that is the seat of the internal senses, and fancy whereby visions are received. So he calls them *a dream*, ver. 1. *and visions of his head upon his bed*. Yet such visions, such a dream it was, as being immediately from God, and containing a no less certain discovery of his will and mind, than if the things mention'd in them had been spoken face to face, he writes them by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, ver. 2. for the use of the Church.

I shall not take the advantage of going forth unto any discourse, of dreams, visions, oracles, and those other diverse ways and manners, *Heb. i. 1.* of revealing his mind and will, which God was pleased to use with his prophets of old, *Num. xii. 6, 7, 8.* My aim lies another way: it sufficeth only to take notice, that God gave him in his sleep a representation of the things here expressed, which he was to give over, for the use of the Church in following ages. The matter of these visions, which did so much trouble him, falls more directly under our consideration. Now,

1. The subject of these perplexing visions is a representation of the four great empires of the world, which had, and were to have dominion, in and over the places of the Church's greatest concerns, and were all to receive their period; and destruction by the Lord Christ, and his revenging hand.

And these three things he mentions of them therein. (1.) Their rise. (2.) Nature. (3.) Destruction.

(1.) In verse 2. he describes their rise and original: it was *from the strivings of the four winds of the heavens, upon the great sea*; he compares them to the most violent, uncontrollable, and tumultuating things in the whole creation: winds and seas! What waves, what horrible storms, what mixing of heaven and earth, what confusion and destruction must needs ensue the fierce contest of all contrary winds



upon the great sea? Such are the springs of empires and governments for the most part amongst men, such their entrances and advancements. In particular, such were the beginnings of the four empires here spoken of. Wars, tumults, confusions, blood, destruction, desolation, were the seeds of their greatness, *vastitatem ubi fecerunt, pacem vocant*, Galgac. *apud Tacit.* Seas and great waters do in the Scripture represent people and nations. *Rev. xvii. 15.* The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues; as waters, they are unstable, fierce, restless, tumultuating, and when God minglcth his judgments amongst them, they are as a sea of glass mingled with fire; brittle, uncertain, devouring, and implacable. It is a demonstration of the sovereignty of God, that he is above them: *Psal. xciii. 3, 4.* The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice, the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea. Now from these, tossed with the winds of commotions, seditions, oppressions, passions, do flow the governments of the world, the spirit of God moving upon the face of those waters, to bring forth those forms and frames of rule which he will make use of.

(2.) Unto verse 9. he describes them in order, as to their nature and kind: one of them being then ready to be destroyed, and the other to succeed, until the utter desolation of them all, and all power rising in their spirit and principle.

I shall not pass through their particular description, nor stay to prove that the fourth beast, without name or special form, is the Roman empire, which I have elsewhere \* demonstrated; and it is something else which at this time I aim at. This is that which troubles and grieves the spirit of *Daniel* in the midst of his body. He saw what worldly powers should arise, by what horrible tumults, shakings, confusions, and violence they should spring up, with what fierceness, cruelty, and persecution, they should rule in the world, and stamp all under their feet.

(3.) Their end and destruction is revealed unto him, from verse 10. unto verse 12, 13. And this,

[1.] By the appearance of the ancient of days, the eternal God in judgment against them: which he sets out with that solemnity and glory, as if it were the great judgment of the last day: God indeed thereby giving a pledge unto the world, of that universal judgment he will one day exercise towards all, by the man whom he hath ordained, *Acts xvii. 31.* And this increaseth the terror of the vision, to have such a representation of the glory of God, as no creature is able to bear: God also manifests hereby his immediate actings, in the setting up, and pulling down the powers of this world, which he doth as fully and effectually, as if he sat upon a throne of judgment, calling them all by name to appear in his presence, and upon the evidence of their ways, cruelties, and oppression, pronouncing sentence against them: *Be wise therefore, O ye Kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling*, *Psal. ii. 11, 12.* He changeth the times and seasons, *Dan. ii. 21.* He ruleth in the kingdom of men, and setteth over it whom he pleaseth, *chap. v. 21.*

And this is the first thing in this vision, at which the prophet was perplexed.

2. There is the approach of the Lord Christ unto the Father, with his entrance into his kingdom and dominion, which is everlasting, and passeth not away, verse 14.

This being the end of the vision, I must a little insist upon it; not that I intend purposely to handle the kingdom of Christ as Mediator, but only a little to consider it, as it lies here in the vision, and is needful for the right bottoming of the truth in our intendment.

Various have been the thoughts of men about the kingdom of Christ in all ages. That the *Messiah* was to be a King, a Prince, a Ruler, that he was to have a kingdom, and that the government was to be on his shoulders, is evident from the Old Testament. That all this was, and is accomplished in *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom God exalted, made a Prince and a Saviour, is no less evident in the New. But about the nature of this kingdom, its rise, and manner of government, have been, and are the contests of men.

*Summa in Heb. xii. 27. See before, p. 317.*



The *Jews* to this very day expect it, as a thing carnal, and temporal, visible, outwardly glorious, wherein, in all manner of pleasure, they shall bear rule over the nations at their will; such another thing of all the world as the Popedom, which the *Gentile*, or idolatrous worshipers of Christ set up for his kingdom: and of some such thing it may be supposed the Apostles themselves were not without thoughts, until they had conversed with the Lord after the resurrection, *Luke ix. 46. Acts. ii. 6.* Neither are all amongst us free from them at this day.

Those who with any simplicity profess the name of Christ, do generally agree, that there are three parts of it.

(1.) First and principally; in that which is internal and spiritual, in and over the souls of men, over spirits both good and bad, in reference unto the ends which he hath to accomplish upon them. Of that which is direct and immediate upon the hearts and souls of men, there are two parts.

[1.] That which he exerciseth towards his elect, who are given unto him of his Father, converting, ruling, preserving them, under and through great variety of dispensations internal and external, until he brings them unto himself: *He stands and feeds them in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, Mich. v. 4. Even he who is the Ruler of Israel, ver. 2. He is exalted and made a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel, for the forgiveness of sins, Acts v. 31. He makes his people a willing people in the day of his power, Psal. cx. 3.* Sending out his holy spirit to lead them into all truth, and making his word and ordinances mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds in their hearts, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of himself, *2 Cor. x. 4, 5.* He takes possession of their hearts by his power, dwelling in them by his spirit, making them kings in his kingdom, and bringing them infallibly into glory. Oh, that this rule, this kingdom of his, might be carried on in our hearts! We busy ourselves about many things, we shall find at length this one thing necessary: this is that part of the kingdom of Christ, which we are principally to aim at in the preaching of the Gospel: *We preach Christ Jesus the Lord, 1 Cor. iv. 5.* Him to be Lord and King, though others have had dominion over us: they are the grains of *Israel* which the Lord seeks for in his sifting the nations by his word, as well as by his providence, and we are in the work of the Gospel to endure all things for the elects sake, *2 Cor. ii. 10.*

[2.] In the power which he exerciseth towards others, to whom the word of the Gospel doth come, calling, convincing, enlightning, hardning many, who yet being not his sheep, nor of his fold, he will never take to himself: but leaves to themselves, under aggravations of condemnation, which they pull upon themselves by the contempt of the Gospel, *2 Cor. ii. 16. Heb. x. 29.* He sends his spirit to convince even the perishing world of sin, righteousness and judgment, *John xvi. 8.* He sendeth sharp arrows into the very hearts of his enemies, *Psal. xlv. 5.* making them stoop, bow, and fall under him: so bounding their rage, overbearing their lusts, leaving them without excuse in themselves, and his people, oftentimes not without profit from them: with some dealing even in this life more severely, causing the witnesses of the Gospel to torment them by the preaching of the word, *Rev. xi. 10.* Yet giving them up to strong delusions, that they may believe lies, and be damned, *2 Thes. ii. 11, 12. &c.*

[3.] In carrying on of this work towards the one and the other, he puts forth the power, rule, and dominion, which he hath of his Father over spirits, both good and bad.

1.) Being made head of principalities and powers, and exalted far above every name in heaven or earth, being made the first-born of every creature, and all the angels of God being commanded to worship him, *Heb. i. 6.* and put in subjection under his feet; he sends them forth, and useth them as ministering spirits for them who shall be heirs of salvation, *ver. 14.* appointing them to behold the face of his Father, ready for his command on their behalf, *Mat. xviii. 10.* Attending in their assemblies, *1 Cor. xi. 10.* And to give them their assistance in the time of danger and trouble, *Acts xii. 9.* Destroying their adversaries, *ver. 23.* With innumerable other advantageous administrations, which he hath not thought good to acquaint us withal in particular, that our dependance might be on our King himself, and not on any of our fellow servants, though never so glorious and excellent, *Rev. xxii. 9.*



2.) For Satan as he came to *bind the strong man armed, and to spoil his goods*, Matth. xii. 29. *To destroy him that had the power of death*, Heb. ii. 14. And being made *manifest to this end, that he might destroy his works*, 1 John iii. 8. In the souls of men in this world, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. So having in his own person conquered these *principalities and powers of darkness, making an open shew of them in his cross, and triumphing over them*, Col. ii. 15. He continues overruling and judging him and them, in their opposition to his Church, and will do so until he bring them to a full conquest and subjection, that they shall be judged and sentenced by the poor creatures, whom in this world they continually pursue with all manner of enmity, 1 Cor. vi. 3.

And this looketh to the inward substance of the kingdom of Christ, which is given him of his Father, and is not of this world, though he exercise it in the world to the last day: a kingdom which can never be shaken nor removed: the government of it is upon his shoulders, and of the increase of it there shall be no end.

(2.) That rule or government, which in his word he hath appointed and ordain'd for all his saints and chosen ones to walk in, to testify their inward subjection to him, and to be fitted for usefulness one to another. Now of this part the administration is wrapt up in the laws, ordinances, institutions, and appointments of the Gospel, and it is frequently called the kingdom of God. That Jesus Christ doth not rule in these things, and is not to be obeyed as a King in them, is but a late darkness, which tho' it should spread as a cloud over the face of the heavens, and pour forth some showers and tempests, yet it would be as a cloud still, which will speedily scatter and vanish into nothing.

And this is that, whose propagation, as the means of carrying on the former spiritual ends of Christ, you desire strength and direction for this day. Men may gather together unto Christ, and say, with heads full of hopes, poor souls, and eyes fixed on the right hand and left, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* Take you his answer and be contented with it: *It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power*, Acts i. 6, 7. But do your work faithfully. I know in this thing, it is far easier to complain of you for not doing, than to direct you what to do; the Lord be your guide, and give you straw wherever bricks are required of you.

(3.) In the universal judgment, which the Father hath committed to him over all, which he will most eminently exercise at the last day; rewarding, crowning, receiving some to himself, judging, condemning, casting others into utter darkness, *John v. 22, 27. Acts ii. 36. Rom. xiv. 9. Acts xvii. 31.* And of this universal righteous judgment, he giveth many warnings unto the world, by pouring forth sundry vials of his wrath, upon great *Nimrods* and oppressors, *Psal. cx. 6. Mich. iv. 3. Rev. xix. 11, 12, 13.* And in the holding forth these three parts of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, doth the Scripture abound.

But now, whether over and beyond all these the Lord Christ shall not bear an outward, visible, glorious rule? Setting up a kingdom like those of the world, to be ruled by strength and power? and if so; when, or how it shall be brought in, into whose hands the administration of it shall be committed, and upon what account, whether he will personally walk therein or no, whether it shall be clearly distinct from the rule he now bears in the world, or only differenced by more glorious degrees and manifestations of his power? Endless and irreconcilable are the contests of those that profess his name. This we find by woful experience, that all who from the spirituality of the rule of Christ, and delight therein, have degenerated into carnal apprehensions of the beauty and glory of it, have for the most part, been given up to carnal actings, suited to such apprehensions, and have been so dazzled with gazing after temporal glory, that the kingdom which comes not by observation, hath been vile in their eyes.

3. Now because it is here fallen in my way, and is part of the vision, at which the prophet was so much troubled, I shall give you some brief observations of what is clear and certain from Scripture relating hereto, and so pass on. It is then certain,

(1.) That the interest of particular men as to this kingdom of Christ, is to look wherein the universal concernment of all saints, in all ages doth lie. This undoubtedly they may attain, and it doth belong to them: now certainly this is in that part

of



of it, which comes not by observation, *Luke xvii. 20.* but is within us, which *is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, *Rom. xiv. 17.* This may be possessed in a dungeon, as well as on a throne. What outward glory soever may be brought in, it is but a shadow of this: this is the kingdom that cannot be moved, which requires grace in us *to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear*, *Heb. xii. 28.* Many have failed in gasping after outward appearances: never any failed of blessedness, who made this their portion. Oh, that this were more pursued and followed after! Let not any think to set up the kingdom of Christ in the world, while they pull it down in their own hearts by sin and folly: in this let the lines fall to me, and let my inheritance be among those that are sanctified. Yet,

(2.) This is certain, that all nations whatever, which in their present state and government, have given their power to *the dragon* and the beast to oppose the Lord Christ withal, shall be shaken, broken, translated, and turned off their old foundations, and constitutions, into which the antichristian interest hath been woven for a long season. God will shake the heavens and the earth of the nations round about, until all the *Babylonish* rubbish, all their original engagements to the man of sin be taken away.

This I have fully demonstrated elsewhere\*. All those great wars which you have foretold, wherein the saints of God shall be eminently engaged, are upon this account.

(3.) That the civil powers of the world, after fearful shakings and desolations, shall be disposed of into an useful subserviency to the interest, power, and kingdom of Jesus Christ: hence they are said to be *his kingdoms*, *Rev. xi. 15.* That is, to be disposed of for the behoof of his interest, rule, and dominion: of this you have plentiful promises, *Isa. lx.* and elsewhere; when the nations are broken in opposition to *Sion*, *their gain must be consecrated to the Lord, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth*, *Mich. iv. 15.* Even judges and rulers, as such, must kiss the Son, and own his scepter, and advance his ways. Some think, if you were well settled, you ought not in any thing, as rulers of the nations, to put forth your power for the interest of Christ: the good Lord keep your hearts from that apprehension. Have you ever in your affairs received any encouragement from the promises of God, have you in times of greatest distress been refreshed with the testimony of a good conscience, that in godly simplicity, you have sought the advancement of the Lord Christ; do you believe that he ever owned the cause as the head of his Church? Do not now profess you have nothing to do with him: had he so professed of you and your affairs, what had been your portion long since?

(4.) Look what kingdom soever the Lord Christ will advance in the world, and exercise amongst his holy ones, the beginning of it must be with the *Jews*; they are to be *caput Imperii*, the head and seat of this empire must be amongst them; these are the *saints of the Most High*, mentioned by *Daniel*: and therefore in that part of his prophecy, which he wrote in the *Chaldean* tongue, then commonly known and spoken in the *East*, being the language of the *Babylonish* empire, he speaketh of them obscurely, and under borrowed expressions; but coming to those visions which he wrote in *Hebrew*, for the sole use of the Church, he is much more express concerning the people of whom he spake. The rod of *Christ's strength goes out of Sion*, and thence he proceeds to rule those that were his enemies, *Psal. cx. 2.* All the promises of the glorious kingdom of Christ, are to be accomplished in the gathering of the *Gentiles*, with the glory of the *Jews*. *The Redeemer comes to Sion, and to them that turn from transgression* (that great transgression of unbelief) *in Jacob*, *Isa. lix. 20.* *Then shall the Lord rise upon them, and his glory shall be seen upon them, the Gentiles shall come to their light, and Kings to the brightness of their rising*, *Isa. lx. 2, 3.* I dare say there is not any promise any where of raising up a kingdom unto the Lord Christ in this world, but it is either expressed, or clearly intimated, that the beginning of it must be with the *Jews*, and that in contradistinction to the nations: so eminently in that glorious description of it, *Mich. iv. 7, 8.* *I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast afar off a strong nation, and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Sion, from hence forth even*

\* Sermon on Heb. xii. 28.



for ever: and thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Sion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion, the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. When the great hunter Nimrod set up a kingdom, the beginning of it was *Babel*, Gen. x. 10. and when the great Shepherd sets up his kingdom, the beginning of it shall be *Sion*: so farther it is at large expressed, *Mich.* v. 7, 8. Nothing is more clear to any, who, being not carried away with weak, carnal apprehensions of things present, have once seriously weighed the promises of God to this purpose: what the Lord Christ will do with them, and by them, is not so clear; this is certain, that their return shall be marvelous, glorious, as life from the dead. When then *Euphrates* shall be dried up, *Turkish* power, and *Popish* idolatry be taken out of the world, and these *Kings of the East* are come, when the seed of *Abraham* being multiplied like the stars of heaven, and the sands of the sea shore, shall possess the gates of their enemies, and shall have peace in their borders, we may lift up our heads towards the fulness of our redemption: but whilst these things are, or may be, for any thing we know, afar off, to dream of setting up an outward, glorious, visible kingdom of Christ, which he must bear rule in, and over the world, be it in *Germany*, or in *England*, is but an ungrounded presumption. The *Jews* not called, antichrist not destroyed, the nations of the world generally wrapt up in idolatry and false worship, little dreaming of their deliverance: will the Lord Christ leave the world in this state, and set up his kingdom here on a molchill?

(5.) This is a perpetual antithesis, and opposition that is put between the kingdoms of the world, and the kingdom of Christ; that they rise out of the strivings of the winds upon the sea, he comes with the clouds of heaven: they are brought in by commotions, tumults, wars, desolations, and so shall all the shakings of the nations be, to punish them for their old opposition, and to translate them into a subserviency to his interest. The coming in of the kingdom of Christ shall not be by the arm of flesh, nor shall it be the product of the strifes and contests of men which are in the world: it is not to be done by might or power, but by the spirit of the Lord of hosts, 2 *Zech.* iv. 6. great wars, desolations, alterations, shall precede it: but it is not the sons of men that by outward force shall build the new *Jerusalem*, that comes down from heaven adorn'd as a bride for Christ, fitted and prepared by himself: certainly the strivings of men about this business shall have no influence into it. It shall be by the glorious manifestation of his own power, and that by his spirit subduing the souls of men unto it; not by the sword of man setting up a few to rule over others. Hence it is every where called a creating of a new heaven, and a new earth, *Isa.* lxv. 17. a work doubtless too difficult for the worms of the earth to undertake. There is nothing more opposite to the spirit of the Gospel, than to suppose that *Jesus Christ* will take to himself a kingdom by the carnal sword and bow of the sons of men. The raising of the *tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and the setting up the decayed places of it*, *Acts.* xv. 16. is done by his visiting the people with his spirit and word, *ver.* 14. It is by the pouring out of his spirit in a covenant of mercy, *Isa.* lix. 21. Thus the Lord sets up one shepherd of his people, and he shall feed them, even, saith he, my servant *David*, he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd, and the Lord will be their God, and my servant *David* a prince among them, *Ezek.* xxxiv. 24, 25. he brings in the kingdom of his Son, by making the children of *Israel* seek the Lord their God, and *David* their King, and to fear the Lord and his goodness, *Hol.* iii. 3. Who now can fathom the counsels of the Almighty, who hath searched his bosom, and can by computation tell us, when he shall pour out his spirit for the accomplishment of these things?

This then is the last thing in this vision, whose consideration brought the prophet into so great perplexity and distress of spirit.

Thirdly, There is the means that *Daniel* used for redress in that sad condition, wherunto he was brought by the consideration of this vision: He drew near to one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this.

This also was done in vision. There is no mention of his waking before his making this address: but the vision continuing, he draws nigh in the same manner to one of them that stood by; one of those angels, or holy ones, that stood ministering before the throne of God, who was commissioned to acquaint him with the mind and will of God in the things represented to them. This then is the remedy he applies himself unto: he labours to know the mind and will of God,



in the things that were to be done, this it seems he pitched on, as the only way for quieting his grieved and troubled spirit; and hereupon,

*Fourthly, He is told and made to know the interpretation of the things,* so far at least as might quiet his spirit in the will of God.

Not that he is clearly instructed in every particular, for he tells them in the close of the *chapter*, that he had troublesome thoughts about the whole; *his cogitations troubled him, and his countenance changed*, ver. 28. but having received what light God was willing to communicate to him, he enquires no farther, but addresses himself to his own duty.

Take then from the words thus opened these *propositions*; some whereof I shall do little more than name unto you.

I. *Observation.* In the consideration of God's marvelous actings in the world, in order to the carrying on of the Gospel, and the interest of the Lord Jesus Christ, the hearts of his saints are oftentimes filled with perplexity and trouble.

They know not what will be the issue, nor sometimes what well to do. *Daniel* receives a vision of the things which in part we live under: and if they fill his heart with astonishment, is it any wonder if they come close to us, and fill us with anxious perplexing thoughts, upon whom the things themselves are fallen?

II. *Observation.* The only way to deliver and extricate our spirits from under such perplexities, and entanglements, is to draw nigh to God in Christ, for discovery of his will.

So did *Daniel* here: he went to one of them that ministered before the Lord to be acquainted with his will, otherwise thoughts and contrivances will but farther perplex you; like men in the mire, whilst they pluck one leg out, the other sticketh faster in; whilst you relieve yourselves in one thing, you will be more hamper'd in another. Yea, he that encreaseth wisdom, encreaseth sorrow, the larger the visions are, the greater will be their troubles; until being consumed in your own fears, cares, and contrivances, you grow useless in your generation: those who see only the outside of your affairs, sleep securely: those who come nigher to look into the spirits of men, rest is taken from them; and many are not quiet, because they will not: the great healing of all is in God.

III. *Observation.* When God makes known the interpretations of things, it will quiet your spirits in your walking before him, and actings with him.

This was that which brought the spirit of *Daniel* into a settlement. How God reveals his mind in these things, by what means, how it may be known by individual persons, for their quiet and settlement, how all God's revelations are quieting, and tend to the calming of mens spirits, not making them foam like the waves of the sea, should be handled on this observation.

But I begin with the first *observation*.

I. *Observation.* In the consideration of God's marvelous actings in the world, in order to the carrying on of the Gospel, the hearts of his saints are oftentimes filled with perplexity and trouble.

When *John* received his book of visions in reference to the great things that were to be done, and the alterations that were to be brought about, though it were sweet in his mouth, and he rejoiced in his employment, yet it made *his belly bitter*, Rev. x. 9, 10. It filled him with perplexity, as our prophet speaks, in the midst of his body; he saw blood and confusion, strife and violence; it made his very belly bitter.

Poor *Jeremiah*, upon the same account, is so oppressed, that it makes him break out of all bounds of faith and patience, to curse the day of his birth, to wax quite weary of his employment, chap. xv.

Our Saviour describing such a season, *Luke* xxi. 26. tells us, *that mens hearts shall fail them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming upon the earth*: they will be thinking what will become of them, and what will be the issue of God's dispensations; fearing that the whole frame of things will be wrapt up in darkness and confusion. Hence our Saviour bids his disciples not be troubled when they hear of these things, *Matth.* xxiv. 6. intimating that they will be very apt so to be.

Now the causes and occasions (which are the reasons of the point) arise.

1. From the greatness and astonishableness of the things themselves, which God will do; *even great and terrible things which men looked not for*, Isa. lxiv. 2, 3.

When



When he comes to make his name known to the nations, that his adversaries may tremble at his presence, and doth terrible things, quite above and beyond the expectation of men, which they never once looked for; no wonder if their hearts be surprized with amazement. It hath of late been so with this nation: all professors at the beginning of these days, joined earnestly in that prayer, *Isa. lxiii. 17, 18, 19. chap. lxiv. 1. God in answer hereunto, comes down and rents the heaven, and the mountains flow down at his presence*, according to the desire of their souls: yet withal he doth terrible things, things that we looked not for. How many poor creatures are turned back with astonishment, and know not how to abide with him? When our Saviour Christ came in the flesh, who had been the desire of all nations for four thousand years, and most importunately sought after by the men of that generation wherein he came, yet doing great and unexpected things at his coming, who was able to abide it? This, says *Simeon*, will be the issue of it, *He shall be for the fall and rise of many; and the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed*, *Luke ii. 34, 35.* Hence is that exclamation, *Mal. iii. 2. Who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?* His coming is desired indeed, but few can bear it: *his day will burn as an oven, as a furnace*, *chap. iv. 1.* Some are over heated by it, some consume in it, blessed are they that abide: this is one cause of the perplexing of the spirits of men. The consideration of the things themselves that are done, being above and beyond their expectations; and this even many of the saints of God are born down under, at this day: they little looked for the blood and banishment of Kings, change of government, alteration of nations, such shakings of heaven and earth as have ensued; not considering that he who doth these things, weighs all the nations in a balance, and the rulers of them are as the dust thereof before him.

2. From the manner whereby God will do these things. Many perplexing, killing circumstances attend his dispensations; I shall instance only in one, and that is darkness and obscurity, whereby he holds the minds of men in uncertainty and suspense, for his own glorious ends: such he tells us shall his day, and the works thereof be. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark. But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass that at evening-time it shall be light*, *Zech. xiv. 6, 7.* Men shall not know what to make of it, nor what to judge: he brings not forth his work all at once, but by degrees, and sometimes sets it backward, and leads it up and down, as he did his people of old in the wilderness, that none might know where they should fall or settle: and he that believeth will not make haste. When God is doing great things, he delights to wrap them up in the clouds, to keep the minds of men in uncertainties, that he may set on work all that is in them, and try them to the utmost, whether they can live upon his care and wisdom, when they see their own care and wisdom will do no good. Men would fain come to some certainty, and commonly by the thoughts and ways whereby they press unto it, they put all things into more uncertainty than ever, and so promote the design of God, which they so studiously endeavour to decline. Hence is that description of the presence of the Lord in his mighty works, *Psal. xviii. 9, 11. Darkness was under his feet; men could not see his paths, &c.* He hath ends of surprisal, hardning, and destruction towards some, for which they must be left unto their own spirits, and led into many snares and by paths, for their trial, and the exercise of others, which could not be accomplished, did he not come in the clouds, and were not darkness his pavilion, and his secret place: on this account is that cry of men of profane and hardened spirits, *Isa. v. 19. Let him make speed and hasten his work that we may see it, and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh that we may know it.* They know not what to make of what they see; of all that is yet done or accomplished, they would have the whole work out, that they might once see the end of it, and so know what to judge: they would be at a point with him, and not always kept at those perplexing uncertainties: and this is another cause of the trouble of mens spirits, in consideration of the dispensations of God. God still keeps a cloud hanging over, and they know not when it will fall, nor what will be done in the issue of things; this makes some weary of waiting on him, and with the profane King of *Israel* to cry, *This evil is of the Lord*, there is no end, confusion will be the issue of all, why should I abide any longer?

3. The



3. The lusts of men do commonly under such dispensations, fearfully and desperately tumultuate, to the disturbance of the most settled and weighed spirits: Satan takes advantage to draw them out in such a season to the utmost, both in spirituals and civils. What will be the constant deportment of men of corrupt minds in such a time, our Saviour sets forth, *Matth. xxiv. 8. They shall come in the name of Christ to deceive, and shall deceive many, and cause iniquity to abound.* In such a day *Edom* will appear an enemy \*, and *Ephraim* with the son of *Remaliah* will joyn with *Syria* for the vexing of *Judah*: hence are perplexities, and swords piercing through the very souls of men. Take an instance in the days wherein we live. From the beginning of the contests in this Nation, when God had caused your spirits to resolve, that the liberties, privileges, and rights of this nation wherewith you were intrusted, should not, by his assistance, be wrested out of your hands by violence, oppression and injustice; this he also put upon your hearts, to vindicate and assert the Gospel of Jesus Christ, his ways and his ordinances, against all opposition, though you were but inquiring the way to *Sion*, with your faces thitherward. God secretly entwining the interest of Christ with yours, wrapt up with you the whole generation of them that seek his face, and prospered your affairs on that account: so that whereas causes of as clear a righteousness among the sons of men as yours, have come to nothing, yet your undertaking hath been like the sheaf of *Joseph*, in the midst of the nations, which hath stood up, when all the others have bowed to the ground: being then convinced that your affairs have fallen under his promises, and have come up to an acceptance before him, solely upon the account of their subserviency to the interest of Christ; God hath put it into your hearts to seek the propagation of his Gospel. What now by the lusts of men is the state of things? say some, there is no Gospel at all: say others, if there be, you have nothing to do with it: some say, Lo here is Christ; others, Lo there: some make religion a colour for one thing; some for another: say some, the magistrate must not support the Gospel; say others, the Gospel must subvert the magistrate: say some, your rule is only for men, as men, you have nothing to do with the interest of Christ and the Church: say others, you have nothing to do to rule men, but upon the account of being Saints. If you will have the Gospel, say some, down with the ministers of it, chemarims, locusts, &c. and if you will have light, take care that you may have ignorance and darkness: things being carried on as if it were the care of men, that there might be no trouble in the world, but what the name of religion might lye in the bottom of. Now those that ponder these things, their spirits are grieved in the midst of their bodies; the visions of their heads trouble them, they looked for other things from them that professed Christ; but the summer is ended, and the harvest is past, and we are not refreshed. Again, God had so stated your affairs, that you were the mark of the antichristian world to shoot at in the beginning; and their terror in the close: and when you thought only to have pursued *Sheba* the son of *Bichri*, the man of your first warfare, behold one *Abel* after another undertakes the quarrel against you: yea such *Abels* as *Scotland* and *Holland*; of whom we said in old times, we will enquire of them, and so ended the matter: and there is not a wise man or woman amongst them, that can dissuade them: Strange! that *Ephraim* should joyn with *Syria* to vex *Judah* their brother, that the *Netherlands*, whose being is founded meerly upon the interest you have undertaken, should joyn with the great antichristian interest, which cannot possibly be set up again, without their inevitable ruin. Hence also are deep thoughts of heart, men are perplexed, disquieted, and know not what to do.

I could mention other lusts, and tumultuations of the spirits of men, that have an influence into the disturbance of the hearts of the most precious in this nation, but I forbear.

4. Mens own lusts disquiet their spirits in such a season as this. I could instance in many, I shall name only four. (1.) Unstableness of mind. (2.) Carnal fears. (3.) Love of the world. (4.) Desire of preheminance.

(1.) Unstableness of mind, which makes men like the waves of the sea that cannot rest: the Scripture calls it *ἀναταραξία*, *tumultuatingness* of spirit: there is some-

\* Obad. xii. 13. Isa vi.



thing of that which *Jude* speaks of, in better persons than those he describes, *raging like waves of the sea, and foaming out their own shame*, v. 13. If God give men up to a restless spirit, no condition imaginable can quiet them, still they think they see something beyond it, that is desirable. *Hannibal* said of *Marcellus*, that he could never be quiet conqueror nor conquered. Some mens desires are so enlarged, that nothing can satiate them. Wise men that look upon sundry godly persons in this nation, and beholding how every yoke of the oppressor is broken from off their necks, that no man makes them afraid, that they are looked on as the head, not as the tail, enjoying the ordinances of God according to the light of their minds, and desires of their hearts, no man forbidding them, are ready to wonder (I speak of private persons) what they can find to do in their several places and callings, but to serve the Lord in righteousness and holiness, being without fear all the days of their lives. But alas! when poor creatures are given up to the power of an unquiet, and unstable mind, they think scarce any thing vile, but being wise unto sobriety: nothing desirable, but what is without their proper bounds, and what leads to that confusion, which themselves in the issue are least able of many to undergo. It is impossible but that mens hearts should be pierced with disquietness and trouble, that are given up to this frame.

(2.) Carnal fears. These even devour and eat up the hearts of men: what shall we do, what shall become of us; *Ephraim* is confederate with *Syria*, and the hearts of men are shaken, as the trees of the wood, that are moved with the wind? What! new troubles still, new unsettlements! This storm will not be avoided, this will be worse than all, that hath befallen us from the youth of our undertakings. God hath not yet won upon mens spirits to trust him in shakings, perplexities, alterations: they remember not the manifestations of his wisdom, power, and goodness in former days; and how tender hitherto he hath been of the interest of Christ, that their hearts might be established. Could we but do our duty, and trust the Lord, with the performances of his promises, what quietness, what sweetness might we have?

I shall not instance in the other two particulars: it is too manifest, that many of our piercing and perplexing thoughts are from the tumultuating and disorder of our own lusts. So that what remains of the time allotted to me, I shall spend only in the use of this point, and proceed no farther.

Use. Of instruction, to direct you into ways and means of quietness, in reference unto all these causes and occasions of piercing, dividing thoughts, in such a season as this. The good Lord seal up instruction to your souls, that you may know the things that belong to your peace, and what *Israel* ought to do at this, even at this time: for my brethrens and companions sake I wish you prosperity: though my own portion should be in the dust, for the true spiritual, not imaginary, carnal interest of the Church of God in this nation, and the nations about, I wish you prosperity.

(1.) First then, in reference to the things that God is doing, both as to their greatness, and their manner of doing; whose consideration fills men with thoughts, that grieve their spirits in the midst of their bodies: would you have your hearts quieted in this respect? take my second *Observation* for your direction: the only way to extricate and deliver our spirits from under such perplexities, and intanglements, is to draw nigh to God in Christ, for the discovery of his will. So did *Daniel* here in my text, I fear this is too much neglected. You take counsel with your own hearts, you advise with one another, hearken unto men under a repute of wisdom; and all this doth but increase your trouble, you do but more and more intangle and disquiet your own spirits. God stands by and says, *I am wise also*; and little notice is taken of him: we think we are grown wise our selves and do not remember we never prospered, but only when we went unto God, and told him plainly we knew not what to do. Publick fastings are neglected, despised, spoken against; and when appointed, practised according as mens hearts are principled to such a duty, coldly, deadily, unacceptably. Life, heat, warmth is gone, and shall not blood and all go after? The Lord prevent it. Private meetings are used, to shew our selves wise in the debate of things, with a form of godly words; sometimes for strife, tumult, division, disorder. And shall we think there is much closet inquiring after God, when all other actings of that principle, which should carry



carry out thereunto, are opposed and slighted? when we do sometimes wait upon God, do not many seem to ask amiss, to spend it on their lusts, not waiting on him, poor, hungry, empty, to know his will, to receive direction from him; but rather going full, fixed, resolved, settled on thoughts, perhaps prejudices of our own, almost taking upon us to prescribe unto the Almighty, and to impose our poor, low, carnal thoughts upon his wisdom and care of his Church? Oh where is that holy, and that humble frame, wherewith at first we followed our God into the wilderness, where we have been fed, and clothed, preserved and protected for so many years? Hence is it that the works of God are become strange, and terrible, and dark unto us: and of necessity, some of us, many of us, must shut up all with disappointment and sorrow. We fill our souls boldly, confidently, with cross and contrary apprehensions of the intendments of God, and of the mediums whereby he will accomplish his ends; and do not consider, that this is not a frame of men, who had given up themselves to the allsufficiency of God. Some perhaps will say, this belongs not unto them, they have waited upon God, and they do know his mind, and what are the things he will do, and are not blind also, nor in the dark as other men. But if it be so, what means this *bleating of sheep and oxen in mine ears*? Yea, what means that roaring and foaming of unquiet waves, which we hear and see: hard speeches, passionate reproaches, sharp revilings of their brethren, in boundless confidence, endless enmity, causing evil surmises, biting, tearing, devouring terms, and expressions, casting out the names of men upright in their generations, saying, the Lord be praised? When the Lord discovers his mind, and will, it setteth the heart, composeth the mind, fills the soul with reverence and godly fear, conforms the heart unto it self, fills it with peace, love, meekness, gentleness. And shall we be thought to have received the mind, the will of God, when our hearts, words, ways, are full of contrary qualities? Let it be called what it will, I shall not desire to share in that, which would bring my heart into such a frame. Well then, beloved, take this for your first direction: Be more abundant with God in faith and prayer, deal with him in publick and private, take counsel of him, bend your hearts through his grace to your old frame, when it was your joy to meet in this place, which now I fear to many is their burthen: seek the Lord and his face, *seek him while he may be found*. And hereby,

[1.] You will empty your hearts of many perplexing contrivances of your own, and you will find faith in this communion with God, by little and little working out, killing, slaying these prejudices, and presumptions which you may be strong in, that are not according to the will of God; so you be sure to come not to have your own lusts, and carnal conceptions answered, but to have the will of God fulfilled. When men come unto the Lord to have their own visions fulfilled, it is righteous with God to answer them according to those visions, and confirm them in them, to their own disturbance, and the disturbance of others.

[2.] You shall certainly have peace in your own hearts in the allsufficiency of God. This he will give in upon your spirits, that whatever he doth, all his ways shall be to you mercy, truth, faithfulness, and peace; yea the discoveries which you shall have of his own fulness, sweetness, suitableness, and the excellency of things which are not seen, will work your hearts to such a frame, that you shall attend to the things here below, meerly upon the account of duty, with the greatest calmness, and quietness of mind imaginable.

[3.] You shall surely know your own particular paths, wherein you ought to walk in serving God in your generation. Those that wait upon him he will guide in judgment, he will not leave them in the dark, nor to distracted, divided, piercing thoughts. But what'er others do, you shall be guided into ways of peace: this you shall have when the lusts of men will neither let themselves, nor others be at quiet. Oh, then return to your rest, look to him from whom you have gone astray; take no more disturbing counsel with your selves, or others; renew your old frame of humble dependance on God, and earnest seeking his face, you have certainly backsliden in this thing. Is not the Lord the God of counsel and wisdom, as well as the God of force and power, that you run to him when in a streight in your actions, but when your counsels seem sometimes to be mixt with a spirit of difficulty and trouble, he is neglected? Only come with humble depending hearts,



not every one to bring the devices, imaginations, opinions, prejudices, and lust of their own hearts before him.

(2.) For the troubles that arise from the lusts of other men, and that about the Gospel, and the propagation thereof (the tumultuating of the lusts of men in reference whereunto I gave you an account of formerly) there are many piercing thoughts of heart. What extreams, I had almost said extravagancies, men have in this matter run out into, I shall now not insist upon: only I shall give you a few directions, for your own practice.

If once it comes to that, that you shall say, you have nothing to do with religion as rulers of the nation, God will quickly manifest that he hath nothing to do with you as rulers of the nation. The great promise of Christ is, that in these latter days of the world he will lay the nations in a subserviency to him, the kingdoms of the world shall become his; that is, act as kingdoms and governments no longer against him, but for him. Surely those promises will scarcely be accomplished in bringing commonwealths of men professing his name, to be of *Galileo's* frame, to take care for none of those things: or as the *Turk*, in an absolute indifferency what any profess; I mean, that are not his own, for in respect of them he changes not his God. Not that I would you should go and set up forms of government, to compel men to come under the line of them, or to thrust in your sword to cut the lesser differences of brethren: not that I think truth ever the more the truth, or to have any thing the more of authority upon the conscience, for having the stamp of your authority annexed to it, for its allowance to pass in these nations. Nor do I speak a word of what is, may, or may not be incumbent on you, in respect of the most profligate opposers of the truths of the Gospel, but only this, that, not being such as are always learning, never coming to the knowledge of the truth, but being fully persuaded in your own minds, certainly it is incumbent on you, to take care that the faith, which you have received, which was once delivered to the saints, in all the necessary concerns of it, may be protected, preserved, propagated to and among the people which God hath set you over. If a father, as a father, is bound to do what answers this in his family, unto his children; a master, as a master, to his servants; if you will justify yourselves as fathers, or rulers of your country, you'll find in your account this to be incumbent on you. Take heed of them that would temper clay and iron, things that will not mingle; that would compound carnal and fleshly things with heavenly things and spiritual, that they may not intangle your spirits. The great design of grasping temporal power, upon a spiritual account, will prove at last to be the greatest badge of antichrist. Hitherto God hath appeared against it, and will no doubt to the end; if either you, by the authority God hath given you in the world, shall take upon you to rule the house of God, as formally such, as his house, though you rule the persons, whereof it is made up, or those who are, or pretend to be of that house, to rule the world on that account, your day and theirs will be nigh at hand.

Now because you wait on God for direction in reference to the propagation of the Gospel, and the preventing that which is contrary to sound doctrine and godliness, I shall

[1.] Shew you very briefly what God has promised concerning magistrates to this end.

[2.] Give you some principles whereon you may rest in your actings. And,

[3.] Lay down some rules for your direction: and so draw to a close.

[1.] Take in the first place what God hath promised concerning magistrates, kings, rulers, judges, and nations, and their subserviency to the Church. What God hath promised they shall do, that is their duty to do: he hath not measured out an inheritance for his people, out of the sins of other men. Let us a little view some of these promises, and then consider their application to the truth we have in hand, and what is cleared out unto us by them: they are many, I shall instance in the most obvious and eminent. *I will restore their judges and priests and counsellors as at the beginning*, *Isai. i. 26.* it is to *Sion* redeemed, purged, washed in the blood of Christ, that this promise is made. *Isai. xlix. 7. Kings shall see and arise, and princes shall bow down themselves.* The *Jews* being for the greatest part of them rejected upon the coming of Christ, this promise is made unto him upon his pour-

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ing out of the spirit, for the bringing in of the *Gentiles*: as it is farther enlarged, v. 22, 23. *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers. Isai. lx.* looks wholly this way: taste of the nature and intendment of the whole. *And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings, and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness,* v. 3, 11, 16, 17. To which add the accomplishment of all those promises mentioned *Rev. xi.* 15, 21, 24.

You see here are glorious promises, in the literal expression looking directly to what we assert concerning the subserviency of rulers to the Gospel, and the duty of magistrates in supporting the interest of the Church. Let us concerning them observe these three things. As,

- 1.) To whom they are made.
- 2.) On what occasion they are given.
- 3.) What is the subject or matter of them in general.

1.) Then they are all given and made to the Church of Christ after his coming in the flesh, and his putting an end to all ceremonial, typical, carnal institutions. For,

(1. They are every way attended with the circumstances of calling the Gentiles, and their flowing into the Church; which were not accomplished till after the destruction of the Jewish Church. So is the case in that which you have *Isai. xlix.* 20. *The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.* It shall be when the Church shall have received the new children of the Gentiles, having lost the other of the *Jews*: which he expresseth more at large, v. 22. *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.* So also are the rest. When God gives the nations to be the inheritance of Christ, the Holy Ghost cautions rulers, and judges to kiss the Son, and pay the homage due to him in his kingdom, *Psal. ii.* 10, 11.

(2. Because these promises are pointed unto, as accomplished to the christian Church in that place of the Revelation before-mentioned, *And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever,* chap. xi. 15. *And the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it,* chap. xxi. 24. So that there are plainly promises of kings and princes, judges, and rulers to be given to the Church, and to be made useful thereunto, and kingdoms and nations, people in their rules and governments to be instrumental in the good thereof: so that these promises belong directly to us, and our rulers, if under any notion, we belong to the Church of Christ.

(2.) For the occasion of these promises; it is well known what a trust by God's own appointment there was invested in the rulers, judges, kings, and magistrates of the judicial state and Church under the Old Testament, in reference unto the ways and worship of God. The prosecution and execution of the laws of God, concerning his house and service being committed to them; farther when they faithfully discharg'd their trust, promoting the worship of God according to his institutions, encouraging, supporting, directing, reproving others, to whom the immediate and peculiar administration of things sacred were committed, destroying, removing whatever was an abomination unto the Lord, it was well with the whole people and Church, they flourished in peace, and the Lord delighted in them, and rejoiced over them to do them good: and on the other side, their neglect in the discharge of their duty, was then commonly attended with the apostacy of the Church, and great breakings forth of the indignation of the Lord: this the Church found in those days and bewailed. To hold out therefore the happy state of his people,



that he would bring in, he promises them such rulers, and judges as he gave at first, who faithfully discharged the trust committed to them: not that I suppose them bound to the *Mosaical* rules of penalties in reference to transgressions and offences against Gospel institutions, but only that a duty in general is incumbent on them in reference to the Church and truth of God, which they should faithfully discharge; of which afterward.

This then being the occasion of those promises, and their accomplishment being as before, in a peculiar manner pointed at, upon the shaking, calling, and new moulding of the kingdoms and nations of the world, which had given their power to the beast, and thereupon framed anew into a due subserviency to the interest of Christ, here is not the least shadow or colour left, for the turning off, and rejecting the sweetness of all these promises, upon an account of their being merely metaphorical, and shadowing out spiritual glories: neither their beginning nor ending, neither their rise, or fall, will bear any such gloss or corrupting interpretation;

3.) As to the matter of these promises, I shall only assert this in general: that the Lord ingaith, that judges, rulers, magistrates; and such like, shall put forth their power, and act clearly for the good, welfare, and prosperity of the Church. This is plainly held out in every one of them: hence kingdoms are said to serve the Church; that is all kingdoms, they must do so, or be broken in pieces, and cease to be kingdoms: and how can a kingdom as a kingdom (for it is taken formally, and not materially, merely for the individuals of it, as appears by the threatening of its being broken in pieces) serve the Church, but by putting forth its power and strength in her behalf, *Isai. lx. 12.* and therefore upon the accomplishment of that promise, they are said to become the kingdoms of the Lord Christ, *Rev. xi. 15.* because, as kingdoms, they serve him with their power and authority; having before, as such, and by their power, opposed him to the utmost. They must nurse the Church not with dry breasts, nor feed it with stones and scorpions, but with the good things committed to them. Their power and substance in protection and supportment, are to be engaged in the behalf thereof: hence God is said to give these judges, rulers, princes, kings, queens to the Church, not setting them in the Church, as officers thereof, but ordering their state in the world (*Rev. xi. 15.*) to its behoof. In sum, there is not any one of the promises recited, but holds forth the utmost of what I intend to assert from them all; *viz.* that the Lord hath promised, that the magistrates whom he will give, own and bless, shall put forth their power, and act in that capacity, wherein he hath placed them in the world, for the good, furtherance, and prosperity of the truth and Church of Christ. They shall protect them with their power, feed them with their substance, adorn them with their favour, and the privileges wherewith they are intrusted: they shall break their forcibly oppressing adversaries, and take care, that those who walk in the truth of the Lord, may lead a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. If then you are such magistrates as God hath promised (as, woe be unto you if you are not) know that he hath undertaken for you, that you shall perform this part of your duty, and I pray that you may rule with him therein; and be found faithful.

[2.] The second ground that I would point unto, as a bottom of your actings in this thing ariseth, from sundry undoubted principles, which I shall briefly mention. And the first is,

1.) That the Gospel of Jesus Christ hath a right to be preached and propagated in every nation, and to every creature under heaven. Jesus Christ is the Lord of lords, and King of kings, *Rev. xvii. 14.* The nations are given to be his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth to be his possession, *Psal. lii. 8, 9.* He is appointed the Heir of all things, *Heb. i. 2.* God hath set him over the works of his hands, and put all things in subjection under his feet, *Psal. viii. 7.* And upon this account he gives commission to his messengers, to preach the Gospel to all nations, *Matth. xxviii. 19.* Or, to every creature under heaven, *Mark xvi. 17.* The nations of the world, being of the Father given to him, he may deal with them as he pleaseth, and either, bruise them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces as a potter's vessel, *Psal. ii. 9.* He may fill the places of the earth with their dead bodies, and strike in pieces the heads of the Countries, *Psal. cx. 6.* Or,



he may make them his own, and bring them into subjection unto himself; which towards some of them he will effect, *Rev. xi. 19.* Now the Gospel being the rod of his power, and the scepter of his kingdom, the grand instrument whereby he accomplisheth all his designs in the world, whether they be for life or for death, *2 Cor. ii. 16.* He hath given that a right to take possession in his name, and authority, of all that he will own in any nation under heaven. And indeed, he hath in all of them, some that are his peculiar purchase, *Rev. v. 9.* Whom in despite of all the world, he will bring in unto himself. To have free passage into all nations, is the undoubted right of the Gospel; and the persons of Christ's goodwill have such a right to it, and interest in it, that look from whomsoever they may claim protection in reference unto any other of their most undoubted concerns amongst men, of them may they claim protection in respect of their quiet enjoyment, and possession of the Gospel.

2.) That wherever the Gospel is by any nation owned, received, embraced, it is the blessing, benefit, prosperity and advantage of that nation. They that love *Sion* shall prosper, *Psal. cxxii. 6.* *Godliness hath the promise of this life, and is profitable unto all,* *1 Tim. iv. 8.* The reception of the word of truth, and subjection to Christ therein, causing a people to become willing in the day of his power, entitleth that people to all the promises, that ever God made to his Church: they shall be established in righteousness, they shall be far from oppression, and for fear and terror, they shall not draw nigh unto them; *whosoever contends against such a people, shall fall thereby: no weapon that is formed against them shall prosper, every tongue that shall rise against them in judgment, they shall condemn, for this is the inheritance of the servants of the Lord,* *Isai. xiv. 14, 15, 17.*

To the prosperity of a nation, two things are required,

(1. That they be freed from oppression, injustice, cruelty, disorder, confusion in themselves, from their rulers, or others.

(2. That they be protected from the sword and violence, of them that seek their ruin from without.

And both these do a people receive, by receiving the Gospel.

(1. For the first, they have the promise of God, that they shall have judges as at the first, *Isai. i. 26.* Such as in justice and judgment shall bear rule over them and among them, as the first judges whom he stirred up, and gave to his ancient people. *their officers shall be peace, and their exactors righteousness,* *Isai. lx. 17.* even the very Gospel which they do receive, is only able to instruct them to be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord, for that only effectually teacheth the sons of men, *to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world,* *Tit. ii. 12.*

(2. And for the second, innumerable are the promises, that are given to such a people; whence the Psalmist concludes upon the consideration of the mercies, they do and shall enjoy, *happy is the people whose God is the Lord,* *Psal. cxliv. 15.* *The glorious God will be to them a place of rivers and broad waters, in which no gally with oars, nor gallant ship shall pass by, the Lord will be their Redeemer, Law-giver, King, and Saviour,* *Isai. xxxiii. 21.* It will interest any people in all the promises, that are made for the using of the Church, to thresh, break, destroy, burthen, fire, consume, and slay the enemies thereof: so far shall a people be from suffering under the hands of oppressors, that the Lord will use them for the breaking and destruction of the *Nimrods* of the earth, and this blessing of the nations do they receive by the faith of *Abraham.*

3.) The rejection of the Gospel by any people or nation to whom it is tendered, is always attended with the certain and inevitable destruction of that people or nation, which sooner or later, shall without any help or deliverance be brought upon them, by the revenging hand of Christ.

When the word of grace was rejected and despised by the *Jews*, the messengers of it professedly turning to the *Gentiles*, *Acts xiii. 46.* and chap *xxviii. 28.* God removing it from them, unto a nation that would bring forth fruit, *Matth. xxi. 43.* As it did in all the world, or among all nations, for a season: *Col. i. 6.* With what a fearful and tremendous desolation he quickly wasted that people, is known to all: he quickly slew, and destroyed those husbandmen, that spoiled his vineyard, and let it forth unto others, that might bring him his fruit in due season.

Hence,



Hence, when Christ is tendered in the Gospel, the judges and rulers of the nations are exhorted to obedience to him, upon pain of being destroyed upon the refusal thereof, *Psal. ii. 12.* And we have the experience of all ages, ever since the day, that the Gospel began to be propagated in the world. The quarrel of it was revenged on the *Jews* by the *Romans*, upon the *Romans* by the *Goths*, *Vandals*, and innumerable barbarous nations; and the vengeance due to the antichristian world is at hand, even at the door. The Lord will certainly make good his promise to the utmost, that *the kingdoms and nations, which will not serve the Church, even that kingdom and those nations shall utterly perish*, *Isai. lx. 12.*

4.) That it is the duty of magistrates to seek the good, peace, and prosperity of the people committed to their charge, and to prevent, obviate, remove, take away every thing, that will bring confusion, destruction, desolation upon them: as *Mordecai* procured good things for his people, and prosperity to his kindred, *Esther x. 4.* And *David* describes himself with all earnestness, pursuing the same design, *Psal. ci.* Magistrates are the ministers of God for the good, universal good, of them to whom they are given, *Rom. xiii. 14.* And they are to watch and apply themselves to this very thing, *v. 6.* And the reason the Apostle gives to stir up the saints of God to pray amongst all sorts of men, in special for kings, and those that are in authority, to wit, that they may in general come to the knowledge of the faith, and be saved, and in particular discharge the duty and trust committed to them (for on that account are they to pray for them, as kings and men in authority) is, that we may *lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*, *1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4.* It being incumbent on them, to act even as kings and men in authority, that we may so do: they are to feed the people committed to their charge with all their might, unto universal peace, and welfare.

Now the things that are opposite to the good of any nation or people, are of two sorts.

(1. Such as are really, directly, and immediately opposed to that state and condition, wherein they closed together, and find prosperity. In general, seditions, tumults, disorders; in particular, violent, or fraudulent breakings in upon the respective designed bounds, privileges, and enjoyments of singular persons, without any consideration of him who ruleth all things, are of this kind. If nations and rulers might be supposed to be atheists, yet such evils as these, tending to their dissolution, and not being, they would with all their strength labour to prevent, either by watching against their commission, or inflicting vengeance on them that commit them, that others may hear, and fear, and do so no more.

(2. Such as are morally and meritoriously opposed to their good and welfare; in that they will certainly pluck down the judgments and wrath of God upon that nation or people, where they are practised, and allowed: there are sins for which the wrath of God will be assuredly revealed from heaven, against the children of disobedience. *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* are set forth as examples of his righteous judgment in this kind. And shall he be thought a magistrate, to bear out the name, authority, and presence of God to men, that so he, and his people, have present peace, like a herd of swine, cares not, though such things as will certainly, first eat and devour their strength, and then utterly consume them, do pass for current: seeing that they that rule over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord, the sole reason why they sheath the sword of justice in the bowels of thieves, murderers, adulterers, is not because their outward peace is actually disturbed by them, and therefore they must give example of terror to others, who being like minded, yet are not yet actually given up to the practice of the like abomination, but also, yea principally, because he in whose stead they stand and minister to the world, is provoked by such wickedness to destroy both the one and the other. And if there be the same reason to be evidenced concerning other things, they also call for the same procedure.

To gather up now what hath been spoken: considering the Gospel's right and title, to be propagated with all its concerns, in every nation under heaven, the blessing, peace, prosperity, and protection wherewith it is attended, when, and where received, and the certain destruction, and desolation, which accompanies the rejection and contempt thereof, considering the duty that by God's appointment, is incumbent on them that rule over men, that in the fear of the Lord they ought to

seek



seek the good, peace, and welfare, and prosperity of them committed to their charge; to prevent, obviate, remove, revenge that which tends to their hurt, perturbation, dissolution, destruction immediate from heaven, or from the hand of men, and in the whole administration to take care, that the worshipers of God in Christ may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. Let any one, who hath the least sense upon his spirit, of the account which he must one day make to the great King and Judge of all the world, of the authority and power wherewith he was intrusted, determine, whether it be not incumbent on him by all the protection he can afford, by all the privileges he can indulge, the supportment that he can grant, by all that encouragement, which upon the highest account imaginable, he is required or allowed to give to any person whatsoever, to farther the propagation of the Gospel, which upon the matter is the only thing of concernment, as well unto this life, as that which is to come. And if any thing be allowed in a nation, which in God's esteem may amount to a contempt and despising thereof, men may be taught by sad experience, what will be the issue of such allowance.

5.) I shall only propose one thing more to your consideration. Although the institutions and examples of the Old Testament, of the duty of magistrates, in the things and about the worship of God, are not in their whole latitude and extent to be drawn into rules, that should be obligatory to all magistrates now under the administration of the Gospel; and that because the magistrate then was *custos, vindex, & administrator legis judicialis, & politicae Mosaicae*, from which as most think we are freed, yet doubtless there is something moral in those institutions, which being unclothed of their Judaical form, is still binding to all in the like kind, as to some analogy and proportion: subduct from those administrations, what was proper to, and lies upon the account of the Church and nation of the *Jews*, and what remains upon the general notion of a Church and nation must be everlastingly binding. And this amounts thus far at least, that judges, rulers, and magistrates, which are promised under the New Testament, to be given in mercy, and to be of singular usefulness, as the judges were under the Old, are to take care that the Gospel Church may in its concernment as such, be supported and promoted; and the truth propagated wherewith they are intrusted; as the others took care that it might be well with the Judaical Church, as such. And on these, and such like principles as these are, may you safely bottom yourselves in that undertaking, wherein you seek for direction from God this day.

[3.] For the rules which I intimated I shall but name them, having some years since delivered my thoughts to the world at large on this subject\*; and I see no cause as yet to recede from any thing then so delivered. Take then only for the present these brief directions following.

1.) Labour to be fully persuaded in your own minds, that you be not carried up and down with every wind of doctrine, and be tempted to hearken after every spirit, as though you had received no truth, as it is in Jesus. It is a sad condition, when men have no zeal for truth, nor against that which is opposite to it, whatever they seem to profess; because indeed having not taken in any truth in the power and principle of it, they are upon sad thoughts, wholly at a loss, whether there be any truth or no: this is an unhappy frame indeed, the proper condition of them whom God will spew out of his mouth.

2.) Know that error and falshood have no right or title, either from God or man, unto any privilege, protection, advantage, liberty, or any good thing you are intrusted withal: to dispose that unto a lie, which is the right of, and due to truth, is to deal treacherously with him by whom you are employed: all the tenderness and forbearance unto such persons as are infected with such abominations, is solely upon a civil account, and that plea which they have for tranquillity, whilst neither directly nor morally they are a disturbance unto others.

3.) Know that in things of practice, so of persuasion, that are impious and wicked, either in themselves, or in their natural and unconstrained consequences, the plea of conscience is an aggravation of the crime: if mens consciences are seared, and themselves given up to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not convenient,

\* Discourse of Toleration, See above, p. 290.



there is no doubt but they ought to suffer such things, as to such practices are assign'd and appointed.

Should I now descend unto particulars in all the things mentioned, and insist on them, time would wholly fail me; neither is it a work for a single sermon: and therefore in one word I shall wind up the whole matter, and end.

Know them then that are faithful and quiet in the land, regard the truth of the Gospel; remember the days of old, what hath done you good, quieted your heart in distress, crown'd your undertakings with sweetness; loose not your first love; draw not out your own thoughts for the counsel of God; seek not great things for yourselves; be not moved at the lusts of men, keep peace what in you lieth, with all that fear the Lord; let the glory of Christ be the end of all your undertakings, &c.

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* S E R M O N XL.

God's Work in founding *Sion*, and his People's Duty thereupon.

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To his Highness the Lord Protector, and to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of *England, Scotland, and Ireland, &c.*



Although I need plead no other reason for the publishing of the ensuing discourse, but your order and command for my so doing; yet because I know that your peculiar interest, as Governours of this commonwealth, in the several stations wherein you are placed of God, is truly stated therein; in the pursuit whereof your peace, and the peace of these nations will be found to lie; I crave leave to add that consideration also. Being fully acquainted in and with what weakness it was composed and delivered, I cannot but conclude, that it was merely for the truth's sake therein contained, which is of God, and its suitableness, through his wise providence, to the present state of things in these nations, that it found acceptance and entertainment with you, which also makes me willing to be therein your remembrancer a second time. From the day wherein I received a command and call unto the service of preaching unto you, unto this issue of it, wherein it is clothed anew with obedience to your order, I found mercy with God to have that caution of the great Apostle abiding in my heart and thoughts: *If I yet please man, I am not a*



*servant of God.* Hence I can with boldness profess, that influenced in some measure with the power of that direction, I studiously avoided whatever might be suggested with the least unsuitableness thereunto, with respect either to myself, or others.

It was for *Sion's* sake that I was willing to undertake this duty and service, rejoicing that I had once more an opportunity to give public testimony to the great concernment of the great God, and our dear Lord *Jesus Christ* in all the concussions of the nations in the world, and peculiarly in his wonderful providential dispensations in these wherein we live. And here as the sum of all, to use plainness and liberty of speech, I say, If there be any thing, in any person whatever, in these nations, that cannot stand with, that can stand without the general interest of the people of God pleaded for, let it fall and rise no more: and the Lord I know will send his blessing out of *Sion*, on whatever in singleness of heart, is done in a tendency to the establishment thereof.

Farther I shall not need to suggest any thing of the ensuing discourse: they who take themselves to be concern'd therein, will acquaint themselves with it, by its perusal. I shall only add, if the general principles asserted therein be in your hearts, if in pursuit thereof you endeavour, that in no corner of this nation it may be said, This is *Sion* that no man careth for; but that those who love the Lord *Jesus Christ* in sincerity, and are by faith and obedience separated from the perishing world, following the Lamb, according to the light which he is graciously pleased to impart unto them, and engaged by the providence of God in that work, which he hath undertaken to accomplish amongst us, be not overborn by a spirit of profaneness, and contempt of the power of godliness, raging in the earth; that they may be preserved and secured from the return of a hand of violence, and encouraged in the testimony they have to bear to the kingdom of Christ, in opposition to the world, and all the ways which the men thereof have received by tradition from their fathers, that are not according to his mind; you will undoubtedly in your several conditions receive blessing from God. Which also that you may in all your concerns, is the daily prayer of,

Your humblest Servant,

in the Work of our dear Lord *Jesus*,

JOHN OWEN.



## ISAIAH xiv. 32.

*What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.*



THE head of the prophecy, whereof these words are the close, lies in ver. 28. *In the year that King Ahaz died was this burden:* which gives us the season, and just time of its revelation and delivery. The kingdom of Judah was at that season low, and broken; foreign invasions, and intestine divisions had made it so. An account hereof is given us, 2 Chron. xxviii. throughout; as it is especially sum'd up, ver. 19. of that chapter: *For the Lord brought Judah low, because of Ahaz King of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord.* Amongst their oppressing neighbours that took advantage at their low and divided condition, their old enemies the Philistines, the posterity of Cham in Canaan, had no small share as ver. 18, of that chapter: *The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country, and of the South of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shocho, with the villages thereof, and Timnah, with the villages thereof, Gimzo also, and the villages thereof, and they dwelt there.*

In this state of things God takes notice of the joy and triumphing of the whole land of Palestina, that is, the country of the Philistines. In that *the rod of him that smote them was broken:* that is, the power of the Kings and kingdom of Judah, which for many generations had prevailed against them, especially in the days of David, 2 Sam. v. and of Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 6. and kept them under, was made weak and insufficient for that purpose, ver. 29. *Rejoice not thou whole land of Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken.*

It is no wonder if Palestina, that was to be smitten, and broken by the rod of God among his people, rejoice at their perplexities and distresses, when we have seen men so to do who pretend to dwell in Judah.

To take them off from their pride and boasting, their triumph and rejoicing; the Lord lets them know, that from the people whom they despised, and that broken rod they trampled upon, their desolation was at hand; tho' they seemed to be perplexed, and forsaken for a season, ver. 29, 30, 31. *Rejoice not thou whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken; for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent. And the first-born of the poor shall feed; and the needy shall lie down in safety, and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay the remnant. Howl, O gate, cry, O city, thou whole Palestina art dissolved; for there shall come from the North a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times.* That it is Hezekiah who is principally intended in these lofty allegorical expressions, that was then rising up from the broken rod of Judah, is evident. He is termed a cockatrice, and a fiery flying serpent, not from his own nature, which was tender, meek, and gentle, wherein the comparison doth not at all lie, nor hold; but in respect of the mischief that he should do unto, the irrecoverable destruction that he should bring on the land of Palestina; which accordingly he perform'd, 2 Kings xviii. 8. *He smote the Philistines even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced cities:* that is, he wasted and destroyed the whole land, from one end even to the other.

It is, it seems, no new thing, that the season of the enemies rejoicing, built upon the outward appearance, and state of things among the people of God, is the beginning of their disappointment and desolation. The Lord make it so in this day of England's expectation, that the rod of it may be strengthened again, yet to smite the whole land of Palestina.

The words of my text are the result of things, upon God's dealings and dispensations before mention'd. Uncertain it is, whether they ought to be restrained to the immediate prophecy before going concerning Palestina, or whether they relate not also to that in the beginning of the chapter, concerning the destruction of the Assyrian



rian, which is summed up, v. 24. 25. *The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, it shall stand: that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountain tread him under foot; then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burthen from off their shoulders.* It is the ruining of Sennacherib, and his army in the days of Hezekiah, that is foretold. Yea, and this seems to claim a peculiar share and influence into this ἐπιτυχίῳ, or triumphant close; because eminently and signally, not long after, messengers were thus sent from *Babylon* to enquire of the health, and congratulate the good success of *Hezekiah*. And well had it been for him, and his posterity, had he given those messengers the return to their inquiry, which was here prepared for him some years before. His mistake herein was the fatal ruin of *Judah's* prosperity. Let not then that consideration be excluded, though the other insisted on, be principally intended.

The words you see have in them, an inquiry and a resolution thereof. I shall open them briefly, as they lye in the text.

First, There is an enquiry.

1. *What shall one*: what *shall*, or what *ought*: what is it their duty to do, or to say? or what shall they, upon the evidence of the things done, so do, or say? Either their duty, or the event is denoted, or both, as in such predictions it often falls out.

2. *What shall one*: that is any one, or every one. The answer spoken of is either the duty of every one to give; or it will be so evident, that any one shall be able to give it. The word *one*, I confess, is not expressly in the original, but is evidently included in the verb וְשִׁירָה; what shall be answered, that is, by any one whatever. There is no more in the translation, than is eminently infolded in the original expression of this thing.

3. *What shall one then*: that is, in the *season* when God hath disappointed the hopes and expectations of the enemies of his people, and hath strengthened their rod to bruise them again more than ever. That is a season wherein great inquiry will be made about those things. What shall one *then* answer? This word also, is included in the interrogation; and much of the emphasis of it consists therein.

4. *Answer the messengers*: that is, *men coming on set purpose to make inquiry* after the state of affairs among God's people, *embassadors, agents, spies, messengers, enquirers* of any sort; or the word may be taken more largely, for any *stranger* that came to *Jerusalem*. The septuagint render these words βασιλεὺς ἰσραὴλ, *the kings of the nations*. What shall they say in this case? τὴν ἀποκριθῆναι; *what shall they answer, or say*? So that word is sometimes used. Some think that for מַלְאָכָיו, which they should have rendered ἀγγέλων, or *messengers*, they read מְלָכָיו, or *kings*, by an evident mistake: but all things are clear in the original.

5. *Of the nations*: that is, of this or that nation, of *any nation* that shall send to make inquiry: *of the heathen*, say some those commonly so called, or *the nations estranged from God*, are usually denoted by this word in the plural number; yet not always under that consideration: so that there may be an enallagy of number, the *nation* for the *nations*, which is usual.

*What shall one answer them*? They come to make inquiry after the work of God among his people, and it is fit that an answer be given to them.

Two things are observable in this interrogation.

I. The nations about will be diligently enquiring after God's dispensations among his people.

Besides what reports they receive at home, they will have messengers, agents, or spies to make enquiry.

II. The issues of God's dispensations amongst his people shall be so evident and glorious, that every one, any one though never so weak, if not blinded by prejudice, shall be able to give a convincing answer concerning them to the enquiries of men.

Something shall be spoken to these propositions in the process of our discourse.

Secondly, there is the resolution given of the enquiry made in this interrogation. Hereof are two parts,



1. What God hath done.

2. What his people shall, or ought to do.

Wrap up at any time the work of God, and the duty of his people together, and they will be a sufficient answer to any man's enquiry after the state of things among them. As to our wisdom in reference unto providential dispensations, this is the whole of man.

1. The first thing in the answer to be given in, is the work of God. *The Lord hath founded Sion*: *Sion*, that is, his Church, his people, his chosen ones, called *Sion* from the place of their solemn worship in the days of *David*, the figure and type of the Gospel Church, *Heb. xii. 22. Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.* It is generally used not for the whole body of that people, unless as they were typically considered, in which respect they were all holy; but for the secret covenanted ones of that people, as is evident from all the promises made thereunto, yet with special regard to the ordinances of worship.

This God *hath founded*: founded, or established, strengthened, that it shall not be removed. *Psal. lxxxvii.* is a comment on these words, he *hath founded* it, that is, in faithful promises, and powerful performances, sufficient for its preservation and establishment.

Now this expression, *The Lord hath founded Sion*: as it is an answer to the enquiries of *the messengers of the nation*, may be taken two ways.

(1.) As giving an account of the work it self done, or what it is that God hath done in and amongst his people. What is the work that is so fam'd abroad, and spoken of throughout the world, that being attempted in many places, and proving abortive, is here accomplished? This is it, shall one say: God hath established his people and their interest. It is no such thing as you suppose, that some are set up, and some pull'd down; that new fabricks of government or ruling are erected for their own sakes, or their sakes who are interested in them; but this is the thing that God hath done, *he hath founded Sion*, established his people and their interest in despite of all opposition.

(2.) As giving a reason of the work done. Whence is it that the Lord hath wrought so mightily for you, amongst you, in your behalf, preserved you, recovered you, supported you, given you success and victory, when all nations conspired your ruin? Why, this is the reason of it: *God hath founded Sion*, he bore it good will, hath taken care of the interest of his Church and people.

The words may be taken in either sense; the issue of their intendment as to our instruction, will be the same. This is the answer to be given to *the messengers of the nation*, who perhaps expected to have heard of their strength and policy, of their counsellors and armies, of their wealth and their riches, of their triumphs and enjoyments. No: *God hath founded Sion*. And well had it been for *Hezekiah*, had he given his answer prepared for him so long before, to the messengers of *Babylon*.

III. The great design of God in his mighty works, and dispensations in the world is the establishment of his people, and their proper interest, in their several generations.

Give me leave to say it is not for this or that form of government, or civil administration of human affairs; it is not for these or those governours, much less for the advantage of one or other sort of men; for the enthroning of any one or other persuasion, gainful or helpful to some few or more, that God hath wrought his mighty works amongst us: but it is that *Sion* may be founded, and the general interest of all the sons and daughters of *Sion* be preserved; and so far as any thing lies in a subserviency thereunto, so far, and no farther, is it with him accepted. And whatever, on what account soever, sets up against it, shall be broken in pieces.

What answer then should we give to enquirers? *That the Lord hath founded Sion*. This is *that*, and that alone, which we should insist upon, and take notice of, as the peculiar work of God amongst us. Let the reports of other nations be what they will, let them acquaint the messengers of one another with their glory, triumphs, enlarging of their empires and dominions. When it is inquired what he hath done in *England*, let us say; *He hath founded Sion*. And he will not leave

until



until every man concern'd in the work shall be able to say, We have buſied our ſelves about things of no moment, and conſumed our days, and ſtrength, in ſer- ing up ſheaves that muſt bow hereunto. This is the main of God's intendment, and whiſt it is ſafe, he hath the glory and end of his diſpenſations.

2. The other part of the answer relates to the people. *The poor of his people ſhall truſt in it.*

The words contain either their duty, they ought to do ſo; or the event, they ſhall do ſo; or both jointly.

(1.) *The poor of his people*, verſe 30. they are call'd, *the firſt born of the poor and needy*: that is, thoſe who are very poor. Now this expreſſion may de- note either the people in general, who had been poor and afflicted; and ſo *the poor of his people* is as much as *his poor people*: or ſome in particular, that partly upon the account of their low outward condition, partly on the account of their lowlineſs of mind, are called *the poor of his people*; and ſo the words are excel- lently paraphraſ'd *Zeph. iii. 12, 13.* I will alſo leave in the miſt of thee an af- flicted, and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord. The rem- nant of *Israel* ſhall not do iniquity, nor ſpeak lies, neither ſhall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth, and none ſhall make them afraid. We may take the words in a ſenſe comprizing both theſe: namely for the *poor, preſerved remnant*, carried through the fiery trial, and preſerved to ſee ſome comfortable iſſue of God's dealing with them, though yet wreſtling with difficulties and perplexities.

(2.) What ſhall they do? They *ſhall truſt in it*: *יִתְּכֵם וּבְיָמֵי יְהוָה* and *in it they ſhall truſt*: that is, being *in it they ſhall truſt*, confide, acquieſce, namely in the Lord, who hath wrought this work: or *in it*, that is, either in the work of God, or in *Sion* ſo eſtabliſhed by God.

The word here uſed for *truſting*, is ſometimes taken for to *repair*, or to retreat to any thing (and not properly to put truſt) affiance, or confidence; and ſo it is rendred in the margin of your books: *They ſhall betake themſelves to it.* So is the word uſed, *Judges ix. 15. Pſal. xxxvi. 7.* So the intendment is: That the poor, preſerv'd people of God, ſeeing his deſign to found *Sion*, and to eſtabliſh the in- tereſt off his choſen, ſhall leave off all other deſigns, aims, and contrivances, and wind up all on the ſame bottom: they ſhall not, at leaſt they ought not (for I told you the words might denote either their duty, what they ought to do; or the event, what they ſhall do) ſet up deſigns, and aims of their own, and contend a- bout other things; but betake their hopes to that which is the main intendment of God, the eſtabliſhment of the intereſt of his people, and caſt all other things in a ſubſerviency thereunto. The ſum is:

IV. It is the duty of God's poor preſerved remnant, laying aſide all other aims and contrivances, to betake themſelves to the work of God, founding *Sion*, and preſerving the common intereſt of his people.

Of the *propoſitions* thus drawn from the words, I ſhall treat ſeverally, ſo far, as they may be foundations of the inferences intended. And,

I. The nations about will be diligently inquiring concerning God's diſpenſations among his people.

Their eyes are upon them, and they will be enquiring after them.

In the handling of this, and all that follows, I humbly deſire, that you would conſider in what capacity, as to the diſcharge of this work, I look upon my ſelf, and you. As you are hearers of the word of God (in which ſtate alone at preſent, though with reference to your deſigned employment, I look upon you) you are not at all diſtinguiſhed from others, or among your ſelves; but as you are believ- ers, or not; regenerate perſons, or coming ſhort thereof. And on this account, as I ſhall not ſpeak of my rulers without reverence; ſo I ſhall endeavour to ſpeak to my hearers with authority.

I ſay then, there are certain affections, and principles, that are active in the na- tions, that will make them reſtleſs, and always put them upon this enquiry. The people of God, on one account or other, ſhall be in all ſeaſons a ſeparated people, *Numb. xxiii. 9.* Lo the people ſhall dwell alone, and ſhall not be reckoned among the nations; yea, they are ſeparated from them, whiſt they are in their bowels, and dwell in the miſt of them, *Micah v. 7, 8.* whether they are amongſt them, as the ſpring of their mercies, or the riſe of their deſtruction (one of which they will al- ways be) yet they are not of them. No ſooner then is any people, or portion of



them, thus dedicated to God, but all the nations about, and those amongst them not engaged in the same way with them, instantly look on them, as utterly sever'd from them, having other ways, ends, and interests than they, being built up wholly on another account and foundation. They reckon not of them as a people, and a nation. The conclusion they make concerning them is, that of *Haman, Esther* iii. 8. There is a certain people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom, and their laws are diverse from all people. Not their moral and judicial laws, which were the sum of that perfection, which all nations aimed at (on which account they said of them, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people, *Deut.* iv. 6. and the keeping of those laws was their wisdom and understanding among all nations) nor yet merely the laws of their religious worship: but the whole way, interest, design, profession of that people, is comprized in this expression, they are *diverse from all people*. Looking on them in this state, they have principles, as I said, that will carry them out to an enquiry into their state and condition.

1. They are full of envy against them: they shall be ashamed of their envy at thy people, *Isai.* xxvi. 11. Looking on them, as wholly separated from them, and standing on another account than they do, they are full of envy at them. Envy is a restless passion, full of enquiries and jealousies; the more it finds of poison, the more it swells and feeds. It will search into the bottom of that which its eye is fixed on. The transaction of the whole business between *Nehemiah* and *Sandballat* gives light to this consideration. See *Neh.* iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. And ever the nearer any nation is to this people, the greater is their envy. It was *Edom*, and *Moab*, and *Ammon*, the nations round about, that were most filled with wrath and envy against *Israel*. Yea when that people was divided among themselves, and the true worship of God remained with *Judah*, and they became the separated people, *Ephraim* was instantly filled with envy against them, *Isai.* xi. 13. The envy also of *Ephraim* shall depart, and the adversaries of *Judah* shall be cut off: *Ephraim* shall not envy *Judah*: for there must be a desire of the same thing, as something answering it (which befalls in proximity of habitation) that a man is envied for, in him that envies him. This is one fountain of the nations enquiry after your affairs.

Through the providence of God you dwell alone, that is, as to your main design and interest. You are not reckoned among the nations, as to the state of being the people of God; so far, and under that consideration they count you not worthy to be reckoned or esteemed a nation. They envy to see the men of their contempt exalted, blessed. The same is the condition of *Ephraim* amongst us, men not engaged in the same cause and way with you, they are full of envy. Wherefore do they enquire of your welfare, of your state and condition, of your affairs? Is it that they love you, that they desire your prosperity, that they would have you an established nation? no, only their envy makes them restless. And as it is in general, so no sooner doth any man upon a private account separate himself from the publick interest of the people of God, but he is instantly filled with envy against the managers of it. And notwithstanding all our animosities, if this hath not befallen us in our differences and divisions, I no way doubt a peaceable composition, and blessed issue of the whole. If envy be not at work, we shall have establishment.

2. A second principle, whereby they are put upon their enquiries, is fear. They fear them, and therefore will know how things stand with them, and what are the works of God amongst them, *Hab.* iii. 7. I saw the tents of *Cushan* in affliction, and the curtains of the land of *Midian* did tremble, I saw it: when God was doing the great work described in that *Chapter*, with many lofty allegorical expressions of bringing his people out of bondage, to settle them in a new state and condition; the nations round about, that looked on them, were filled with affliction, fear, and trembling. They were afraid whether these things would grow, *Psal.* xlviii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is mount Sion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge. For lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together: they saw it, and so they marvelled: they were troubled,



troubled, and so they hasted away. For fear took hold upon them there, and pain as of a woman in travail. The close of all the considerations of these Kings, and their attendants, is, that fear took hold upon them. Fear is solicitous and enquiring; it will leave nothing unsearched, unlooked into; it would find the inside and bottom of every thing, wherein it is concerned. Though the more it finds, the more it is encreased; yet the greater still are its enquiries, fearing more what it knows not, than what it knows; what is behind, than what appears. This puts the nations upon their enquiry, they are afraid what these things will grow to. *Psal. cxxvi. 2. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing, then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them:* they are the words of men pondering their affairs, and filled with fear at the issue. If God do such things as these for them, what think you will be the issue? I dare say of the proudest adversaries of the people of God at this day, notwithstanding all their anger, they are more afraid than angry. The like also may be said concerning their wrath, revenge, and curiosity, all pressing them to such enquiries.

This is the issue of this proposal. If we are not a separated people unto God; if our portion be as the portion of the men of the world, and we are also as they, reckoned among the nations; if we have had only national works, in the execution of wrath on men fitted thereunto amongst us; wo unto us that we were ever engaged in the whole affair, that for some years we have been interested in. It will be bitterness and disappointment in the latter end. If we be the Lord's peculiar lot, separate unto him, the nations about, and many amongst ourselves, on the manifold accounts before mentioned, will be enquiring into our state and condition, and the work of God amongst us. Let us consider what we shall answer them, what we shall say unto them, what is the account we give of God's dealings with us, and of his mighty works amongst us, what is the profession we make. If we seek our selves, if we are full of complaints and repinings one against another, if every one hath his own aims, his own designs (for what we do, not what we say, is the answer we make) if we measure the work of God by its suitableness to our private interests; if this be the issue of all the dealings of God amongst us, we shall not have wherein to rejoice. But of these things afterwards. The second *proposition* is,

II. The issue of God's dealing with, and dispensations among his people, shall be so perspicuous and glorious, that one, any one, every one, shall be able to give an answer to them that make enquiries about them.

*What shall one then say?* Whether it be for judgment, or mercy, all is one: he will make the event to be evident and glorious. *He is our rock, and his work is perfect;* and he will have his works so known, as that they may all praise him. Be it in judgment, see what issue he will bring his work unto, *Deut. xxix. 24, 25. Even all nations shall say: Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say: Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their Fathers, which he made with them, when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt. Men shall say,* ordinary men shall be able to give this sad account of the reason of the works of God, and his dealings with his people. So also as to his dispensations in mercy, *Isa. xxvi. 11. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.* He will not leave the work of his favour towards his people; until those who are willing to shut their eyes against it do see; and acknowledge his hand and counsel therein.

I do not say this will hold in every dispensation of God, in all seasons; from the beginning to the ending of them. In many works of his power and righteousness he will have us bow our souls to the law of his providence, and his sovereignty, wisdom, and goodness therein, when his footsteps are in the deep, and his paths are not known: which is the reasonablest thing in the world. But this generally is the way of his proceedings, especially in the common concernment of his people, and in the disposal of their publick interests; his works, his will, and counsels therein shall be eminent and glorious. It is chiefly from ourselves, and our own follies, that we come short of such an acquaintance with the works of God, as to be able to give an answer to every one, that shall demand an account of them. When David was stagger'd at the works of God, he gives this reason of it: *I was foolish, and*



as a beast before him, Psal. lxxiii. 22. That thoughtfulness and wisdom which keeps us in darkness, is our folly.

There are sundry things that are apt to cloud our apprehensions, as to the mind of God in his dealing with his people. As,

1. Selffulness of our own private apprehensions and designs. A private design and aim in the works of providence, is like a private, by opinion in matters of religion. You seldom see a man take up a by opinion (if I may so speak) but he instantly lays more weight upon it, than upon all religion besides. If that be not enthron'd, be it a matter of never so small importance, he scarce cares what becomes of all other truths which he doth embrace. When men have fix'd to themselves, that this or that particular, must be the product of God's providential dispensations, that alone fills their aims and desires, and leaves no room for any other apprehension. Have we not seen persons in the days wherein we live, so fixed on a reign, a kingdom, I know not what, that they would scarce allow God himself to be wise, if their minds were not satisfied: *Give me this child or I die.* Now is it probable, that when mens whole souls are possessed with a design and desire of their own, so fully, that they are cast into the mould of it, are transformed into the image and likeness of it, they can see, hear, think, talk, dream nothing else, that they shall be able to discern aright, and acquiesce in the general issue of God's dispensations, or be able to *answer the messengers of the nations*, making enquiry concerning them? Fear, hope, wrath, anger, discontentment, with a rabble of the like minddarkning affections, are the attendants of such a frame. He who knows any thing of the power of prejudices, in diverting the minds of men from passing a right judgment on things proposed to them, and the efficacy of disordered affections for the creating and confirming of such prejudices, will discern the power of this darkning disturbance.

2. Private enmities, private disappointments, private prejudices, are things of the same consideration. Let a man of a free and large heart and spirit abstract his thoughts from the differences that are among the people of God in this nation, and keep himself from an engagement into any particular design and desire: it is almost impossible that he should wink so hard, but that the issue and reason of God's dealing with us will shine in upon his understanding, so that he shall be able to give an account of them, to them that shall make enquiry. Will he not be able to *say to the messengers of the nations*, and all other observers of the providential alterations of the late times, that have passed over us: The people of God in this nation were despised, but are now in esteem: they were under subjection to cruel task-masters, some in prisons, some banish'd to the ends of the earth, merely on the account of the worship of their God, the consciences of all enthrall'd, and of many defiled and broken on the scandals laid before them, whilst iniquity and superstition were establish'd by law; but this is that which God hath now done and accomplished, the imprison'd are set at liberty, the banish'd are recalled, they that have lain among the pots have got doves wings, conscience is no more enthrall'd, their sacrifices are not mix'd with their blood, nor do they meet with trembling in the worship of God. O ye *messengers of the nations*, this is that which the Lord hath done! Who, I say, not entangled with one prejudicate engagement or other, may not see this with half an eye? But such is our state and condition, such our frame and temper, so full are we of our own desires, and so perplexed with our own disappointments, that we can see nothing, know nothing, nor are able to give any word of account, that may tend to the glory of our God, to them that enquire of us; but every one vents his own discontentments, his own fears, his own perplexities. The Lord look down in mercy, and let us not be found despisers of the work of his power and goodness. Ah! how many glorious appearances have I seen, of which I said, under the shadow hereof, *Shall we live among the heathen?* but in a short space they have passed away. Shall we therefore *chuse us a captain, and go down again into Egypt?* The third proposition ensues.

III. The great design of God in his mighty works and dispensations is the establishment of his people, and their proper interest, in their several generations.

To make this clear some few things are previously to be consider'd. As,

1. The proper interest of the people of God is to glorify him in their several places, stations, and generations: none of us are to live unto ourselves. It is for this end that



that God hath taken a peculiar people to himself in this world, that he might be glorified by them, that his name may be born forth by them, and upon them. This is the great end whereunto they are design'd, and that which they ought to aim at only, even to glorify God. If this be not done, they fall off from, and are besides their proper interest. Besides innumerable testimonies to this purpose, I might give evidence to this assertion from God's eternal, electing love towards them, with his intendment therein; from their redemption out of every kindred, tribe, and family under heaven, by the blood of Christ; from their separation from the world, by their effectual calling, and the like considerations. But I have the consenting voice of them all in general, and of every individual in particular, crying out, This is our, this is my proper interest, that we may glorify God; fail we, and come short in this, we come short, and fail in the whole: so that I shall not need farther to confirm it.

2. God is the only proper and infallible judge, in what state and condition his people will best, and most glorify his name, in their several generations. I think I need not insist on the proof of this assertion. *Should it be according to thy mind*, saith he in *Job xxxiv. 33.* or according to the mind of God? Should the disposal of things be according to his will, or ours? Whose end is to be obtained in the issue of all? is it not his glory? Who hath the most wisdom to order things aright, he or we? Who hath the chiefest interest in, and right unto the things contended about? Who sees what will be the event of all things, he or we? Might men be judges, would they not universally practically conclude, that the condition wherein they might best glorify God would be, that they might have peace and rest from their enemies, union and a good understanding among themselves, that they might dwell peaceably in the world, without controul, and have the necks of their adversaries under their feet? this in general: in particular: that this, or that persuasion, that they are peculiarly engaged in, might be always enthron'd; that their proper sheaf might stand upright, and all others bow thereunto, and that nothing is contrary to the glory of God, but what disturbs this condition of affairs? I know not what may be accomplished before the end of the world; from the beginning of it hitherto, for the most part the thoughts of God have not been as these thoughts of ours: he hath judged otherwise as to the condition wherein his people should glorify him. God is judge himself; let us, I pray you, leave the determination of this difference to him; and if it be so as to our general condition, much more is it so as to our peculiar designs and aims, wherein we are divided.

3. Providential dispensations are discoveries of the wisdom of God in disposing of the condition of his people, so as they may best glorify him. To dispute against the condition wherein at any time we are cast by his providence, is to rise up against his wisdom in disposing of things to his own glory.

These things being premised, it is easy to give light and evidence to the assertion laid down.

I might go through the stories of God's dealings with the nations of the world, and his own people amongst them, and manifest in each particular, that still his design was the establishment of his people's proper interest. But instead of instances, take two or three testimonies that occur. *Deut. xxxii. 8. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel:* from the beginning God hath so order'd all the nations of the world, that they may bear a proportion to what he hath to do with his people; that he may so order and dispose of them, as that his design towards his own may be accomplished. *Amos ix. 9. For lo I will command and will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth:* all the stirrings and commotions that are in the world, are but God's siftings of all the nations, that his chosen ones may be fitted for himself, and not lost in the chaff and rubbish. *Heb. xii. 26, 27. Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken, may remain:* all the shakings of the nations are, that the unshaken interest of the saints may be established. *Isa. li. 15, 16. But I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared, the Lord of hosts is his name. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and have*



*covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people: heaven, and earth, and all things therein, are disposed of, that Sion may be built and established. All God's works in this world lie in a subserviency to this end and purpose. Doth God at any time prosper an evil, or a wicked nation? an antichristian nation? is it for their own sakes? Doth God take care for oxen? hath he delight in the prosperity of his enemies? No: it is only that they may be a rod in his hand for a little moment, and a staff for his indignation against the miscarriages of his people. Isa. x. 5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. This in such a season is their proper interest, to glorify God in distress. Doth he break, ruin, and destroy them, as sooner or later he will leave them neither root nor branch? All that he doth to them is a recompence for the controversy of Sion. Isa. xxxiv. 9. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Sion.*

We see not perhaps at this day, wherein the concernment of the remnant of God's people doth lie, in the great concussions of the nations in the world: we know not what design in reference to them may lie therein. Alas! we are poor short sighted creatures, we know nothing that is before us; much less can we make a judgment of the work of God, in the midst of the darkness and confusion that is in the world, until he hath brought it to perfection. All lies open and naked to his eye, and the beauty of all his works will one day appear. The true and proper interest of his people, so as they may best glorify him in the world, is that which he is pursuing in all these dispensations.

The grounds, reasons, and foundations of this truth, in the counsel, from the love, and attributes of God, the redemption in the blood of Jesus, I must not now pursue. This one thing I shall only offer: The state of *Sion*, of the people of God, being much to depend upon the disposals of them, whom God by his providence raiseth up to rule and government among the nations; though sometimes he sets up men whose hearts and minds are upright with himself, yet he will not trust his own to their mercy, and the variableness of their wills in general; but will so dispose, alter, weaken, and strengthen them, to set them up, and pull down, that it shall be their interest, to which they will always abide faithful, so to deal with his people, as he will have them dealt with, that they may best glorify him in their generations.

If it be in the infinite, wise counsel of God, to give his saints in this nation peace and tranquillity, they shall not have it precariously upon the wills of men; for he will not leave moulding and disposing of the affairs of the nation, until it find, that it is its proper interest to give, and measure out unto them, what is to the mind of God. All that hath been done amongst us, all that we are in expectation of, turns on this hinge alone. But lastly,

IV. It is the duty of God's preserved remnant, laying aside all other aims and contrivances, to betake themselves to the work of God, founding *Sion*, and preserving the common interest of his people.

*God hath founded Sion, and the poor of the people shall trust therein*, or, betake themselves unto it. We are apt to wander on hills and mountains, every one walking in the imagination of his own heart, forgetting our resting place. When God was bringing the power of the *Babylonian* upon his people, the prophet *Jeremiah* could neither persuade the whole nation to submit to his government, nor many individuals among them to fall to him in particular. And when the time of their deliverance from that captivity was accomplish'd, how hardly were they persuaded to embrace the liberty tendred? Notwithstanding all encouragements and advantages, the greatest part of them abide in that place of their bondage to this day. So hardly are we brought to close with God's peculiar work, and our own proper interest, although his glory, and our own safety lie therein. The *reasons* of this frame I have in part touched before, I shall add but two more.

1. Discontentment with our peculiar lot and portion in the work of the Lord, and common interest of his people. It is with us in our civil affairs, as the Apostle saith it is not in the natural body, nor ought to be in the spiritual or Church body. The foot doth not say, because I am not the head, I am not of the body; no, it doth not, but is content with its own place and usefulness. It is so with the rest of the members that are more noble, and yet are not the head neither. It is otherwise with



with us. I interpose not my thoughts, as to your present constitution, and the order of things amongst us. I speak no more than I have sundry years since, sundry times complained of to a parliament of this commonwealth. Every one, if not personally, yet in association with them of some peculiar persuasion with himself, would be the head; and because they are not, they continue they are not of the body, nor will care for the body, but rather endeavour its ruin. Because their peculiar interest doth not reign, the common interest shall be despised. And this hath been the temper, or rather distemper, of the people of God in this nation now for sundry years; and what it may yet produce I know not. Only for the present the work of God in founding *Sion*, in pursuing his peoples common interest, is despised, thought light of, and all the pleasant things thereof trodden under foot. Unless God end this frame, my expectations, I confess, of an happy issue of the great work of God amongst us will wither day by day.

2. The suffering of our wills, and judgments, as to the products of providence, to run before the will of God. This the experience of these days hath taught us. Those who have a forwardness in prescribing to God what he should do, as to the *modus*, or *manner* of the work, which at any time he hath to accomplish, are stubbornly backward in closing with what he doth actually produce. These, and the like things, which might be in large catalogues reckoned up one after another, detain the minds of men from acquiescing in the common interest of *Sion*, whose preservation is the whole peculiar design of the great work of God in any place or season. These foundations being laid in the words of the text, let us now see what inferences from them may be made for our advantage and instruction.

*Use 1.* Let us then consider diligently, what we shall answer the messengers of the nations. Some think that by the *nation*, is peculiarly intended the nation of the Jews themselves, whose messengers from all parts came to *Jerusalem* to enquire of the work of God, and to advise about the affairs of the whole. In this sense you are the messengers of this nation, to whom an answer is to be returned. And because the text saith, one shall do it, that is, any one, I shall make bold before we close, to give an answer to your enquiries, and endeavour to satisfy your expectations. In the mean time, as the words seem more directly to respect the enquiries of other nations; so it is in a special manner incumbent on you, who will be especially enquired of, to return an answer to them. Be provided then, I pray, in your own hearts, to give an answer in this business. And oh that you could do it with one heart and lip, with one consent, and judgment. On whom are the eyes of this nation, and of those round about? from whom are the expectations of men? to whom should we go to enquire what God hath done in this nation, what he is doing, what are the effects of his power, if not of you? Some of you have been engag'd in this work with the Lord from the beginning. And I hope none of you have been engag'd in heart, or hand against it; and you speak still with living affections to the old and common cause. If you will be able to steer your course aright, if you would take one strait step, have in a readiness an acquaintance with the work of God, what it is that he aims at, by which you may be guided in all your undertakings. Suppose now a man, or men, should come and ask of you, what God hath done in these nations; what he hath wrought, and effected; what is brought forth? Have you an answer in readiness? Certainly God hath done so much, as that he expects you should be able to give an account of it: take heed that every one of you be not ready to speak the disquietness of your own spirits, and so cast contempt on the work of God. Something else is requir'd of you. I have sometimes in darkness, and under temptations my self, begun to think, that what hath been, is the thing that is, and there is no new thing under the sun. As it hath been among the heathen of old, so it hath been amongst us; or, as it was with *Israel*, *1 Kings xvi. 21, 22.* Then were the people of *Israel* divided into two parts, half of the people followed *Tibni* the son of *Ginath*, to make him king; and half followed *Omri*. But the people that followed *Omri* prevailed against the people that followed *Tibni* the son of *Ginath*: so *Tibni* died, and *Omri* reigned: that a common thing, and frequent in the world had fall'n us, wherein God had no hand, but that of common providence, in dashing one sort of men against another. So foolish have I been, and as a beast, so ready to condemn the generation of the righteous, so unbelieving



and ready to cast away the faith and prayer of ten thousand Saints; one of whose sighs shall not be lost. But such fearful effects sometimes trouble, disquietment, disappointment, and carnal fear will produce. But certain it is, none of the many crys of the people of God shall be lost, nor their faith be disappointed. God hath a peculiar design in hand, and we are to find it out, that we may be able to answer them that make enquiries. If you lay not this foundation of your procedures, I shall not wonder if you err in your ways. It is your Pole star, and will be so, by which your whole course is to be steered: your shield, which whilst it is safe, though you dye, your glory abides.

But you will say: What then is this great design of God among his people? Let the holy one of *Israel* bring nigh his work, that we may know it. What is that true and general interest of *Sion* that he hath founded? Let us know it, that we may be able to give an answer to them that enquire after it. Ask themselves, those who have prayed for it, waited for it, expected it, are made partakers of it, do enjoy it, live upon it; probably they will be able to give you an account what is their peculiar and only interest, as to these providential dispensations; surely they cannot but know that which they enjoy and live upon.

But you will say: Of all others this is the most unlikely, and irrational course, a way to perplex and entangle, not to inform us at all. Is it not clear, that they are divided among themselves? Is not their language, is not their voice, like that of the *Jews* at the building of the second temple? Some *shouted for joy*, and some *wept* at the remembrance of the former temple? Are not their desires rather like that, and those of theirs, who built *Babel*; than of those who cry grace, grace, whilst God is founding *Sion*? Do not many of them utterly deny any work or design of God (I mean that is peculiar) in the affairs of this nation; and utterly fall away from the society of them, who are otherwise persuaded? And is it likely that we can gather any resolution from them? Doth not the greatest danger of our own miscarriage lye in this, that we may be apt to attend to their peculiar desires, and so to divide amongst our selves, as they are divided?

And is this the return that indeed is to be made? O that mine eyes might run down with water day and night on this account, that my heart might be moved within me, for the folly of my people. *Ah foolish people and unwise, do we thus requite the Lord!* It is true, many at all times have desired the day of the Lord, who when it hath come, have not been able to abide it; it hath consumed them, and all the principles whereon they have acted, and upon which they did desire it. But that those who have their share in it indeed, should be thus broken among themselves, should bite one another, devour one another, and scarce allow one another to be sharers in the common interest of the saints, in that day, this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation. But yet something may be farther pressed on them in this business. When one went to demand of the philosophers of the several sects, which was the best of them; every one named his own sect and party in the first place; but all of them in the second place granted that of *Plato* to be the most eminent. The enquirer knew quickly what to conclude; setting aside prejudicate affections, self love, and by interests, he saw that the judgment of all run on that of *Plato*, as the best and most eminent sect, and which thereupon he preferred before the rest.

May not some enquiry of the like nature be made of the people of God amongst us? Ask them, what is the common interest of *Sion*, that God takes care of, that he hath founded in the days wherein we live, in the great transactions of providence that have passed over us? Say some: That such a form of Church worship and discipline be established, such a rule of doctrine confirmed, and all men whatever compelled to submit unto them; herein lies that kingdom of Christ, which he takes care of, this is that which God will have founded and established. And what this form, what this rule is, we are to declare. That that discipline be eradicated, the ministers provision destroyed, and the men of such a persuasion enthroned, to rule all the rest at their pleasure; seeing, that notwithstanding all their pretended reformation, they are yet antichristian, say others. Say some: That a kingdom and rule be set up in our hands, to be exercised in the name and authority of Jesus Christ, taking away all law and magistracy already established, to bring forth the law of righteousness conceived in our minds and therein to be pre-

served;



served; all uniting only in this, that a sovereignty as unto administration of the things of God is to be theirs. Say others, lastly: That the people of God be delivered from the hands of their cruel enemies, that they may serve the Lord without fear all the days of their lives in righteousness and holiness; that notwithstanding their present differences, they may live peaceably one with, or at least one by another, enjoying rule and promotion, as they are fitted for employments, and as he gives promotion, in whose hand it is: that godliness, and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ be preserved, protected, and secured, from a return of the hand of violence upon it. Herein, say some, lies the common interest of the people of God; this he hath wrought out for them, herein he hath founded *Sion*. Ask now the people of God in this nation, I say, or any of them, one or more at any time, what he, or they, look upon as the chief thing aimed at in the mighty dispensations of God amongst us. Will they not every one answer in the first place, that is aimed at, that is to be enthroned, that so doing is the will of God, the end of his works among them, wherein their, or his, particular ingagement and interest lies? But ask them now again in the second place: Which of the remaining persuasions concerning the work of God, and the common interest of his people, they would prefer next to their own? Will they not all unanimously fix on that mentioned in the last place, rather than any of the other? Is it not then evident that setting aside prejudicate affections, and such determinations, as may reasonably be supposed to arise from them; laying away all private animosities, and desire of rule and preminence, with other worldly and selfish designs, the universality of the people of God, do answer to them that enquire, that in the last persuasion lies the aim, and work of God in our generation. For my own part, on this, and other considerations hereafter to be mentioned, I shall dare freely to give this *answer to the messengers of this*, or any *nation* in the world, who shall make inquisition after the work of God amongst us, and his design in reference to his people; and it is no other than my heart hath been fixed upon for many years, and which I have several times, on one account or other intimated, or pressed unto the parliament, which first undertook to manage, and successfully carried on that Cause, in whose protection you are now engaged.

This I say then, *God hath founded Sion*, he hath taken care of the generation of the righteous, the children of *Sion*, however differenced among themselves; hath broken the yoke of their oppressors, given them peace, ordered the affairs of this nation so, that they do, or may, all of them enjoy, quietness, one not envying the other, nor they vexing them, but serving God according to the light which he is graciously pleased to afford them, they wait for farther manifestation of the glorious Gospel; and that God hath broken, and will break, every design, that either openly, and professedly, or under specious pretences of crying, lo here is Christ, or lo there, hath sought, or shall seek and endeavour to subvert this his work, to the preservation whereof he will certainly mould the government, and interest of this nation, ordering its affairs in a peculiar manner on that account only; and not that he delighteth in one way or form, whereinto it hath been cast, more than another. And whatever high minded men, full of their own apprehensions and wisdom, may do to this *work of God, the poor of his people shall repair*. And for my insisting on this answer, and this only, I have these farther *reasons* to add for my justification.

(1.) This is an interest comprehensive of all the sons of *Sion*, whose founding God intends; it excludes none that can claim a share in the City of the living God. God takes equal care of all the dwelling places of *Sion*. Every dwelling place of *Sion* hath its beauty, hath its glory, *Isai. iv. 5*. The glory of one may be as the glory of the sun, of another as the moon, of others as the stars, and those differing from one another in glory; yet each hath its glory, *and upon it there shall be a defence*, a covering, a protection. This is the promise, this hath been the work of God.

(2.) This compriseth all them who have lived by faith, and abode in supplications in reference to God's late dispensations amongst us. Who dare despise any one of those little ones, and say, God hath heard me, not you; regarded me, not you, you have no share or portion in the returns of supplications, which we enjoy?

(3.) This



(3.) This alone preserveth the dwellers of *Sion* from offering violence one to another, from taking the work of *Babylon* out of its hands, and devouring one another. Let any other apprehension whatever of the work of God be embrac'd, and the first work that thereby men will be engag'd in, is the oppressing, persecuting, ruining of their brethren; which whether it be the founding of *Sion*, or no, the day of judgment shall determine.

(4.) This is that, which the common enemy seeks to destroy. It is not this, or that party, that he would devour; it is not this, or that persuasion, he would cast down; his hatred is, *πρός τὸ γένος*, against the whole race and kind. This is that which he would accomplish, that all the children of God, however differenced among themselves, might be ruined, destroyed, cast down, and rooted out for ever, that the name of *Israel* might no more be had in remembrance. This then is that which God, in their disappointment, aims to establish.

(5.) Because the founding of *Sion* doth not consist in this, or that form of the civil administration of human affairs; there being nothing promised, nor designed concerning them, but that they be laid in an orderly subserviency to the common interest of the Saints; which let men do what they will, yea what they can, all government shall at last be brought unto. And who is there amongst us, that in singleness of heart dares make such an answer to the messengers of the nations, enquiring after the peculiar work of God amongst us, namely, that it consists in the establishment of this, or that form of civil administration, though much of the work of God lies therein, in relation to this general end? This then is the answer which I shall give to the messengers of the nations, and of it there are these three parts.

[1.] God hath broken, destroyed, ruined them and their contrivances, who made it their business to overthrow *Sion*, and to root out the generation of the righteous, not under this, or that way or form, whereby they are differenced among themselves, but as such, as the saints of the holy One, and will continue so to do.

[2.] He hath given to them, to the poor of his people, peace, liberty, freedom from impositions on their consciences, with much glorious light in several degrees in his worship and service.

[3.] He hath cast (as he hath promised) the power of the nation into a subserviency to this common interest of Christ, and his people in this world; and hath made, or will make them to understand, that as the peace of *Sion* lies in their peace, so their peace lies in the peace of *Sion*. And what to say more to the messengers of the nation, I know not.

Use 2. If this then be the work of God, let us repair to it. The poor of the people shall trust therein, or joyn themselves thereunto. That you may do this in judgment, be pleased to take these directions, which with all humility I offer to you, and I hope from the Lord.

(1.) Ingage in no way, no counsels, be the reasonings and pretences for them never so specious, which have an inconsistency with this common interest of *Sion* in this generation. If instead of repairing to the work of God, you should be found contending against it, and setting up your own wisdom, in the place of the wisdom of God, it would not be to your advantage. I know many things will be suggested unto you; settling of religion, establishing a discipline in the Church, not to tolerate errors, and the like. From which discourse I know what conclusions some men are apt to draw, if no otherwise, yet from what they have been doing for many years. Do we then plead for errors and unsettlement? God forbid! God hath undertaken to found and establish *Sion*, to settle it, and he will do it; and I pray God you may be instrumental therein according to his mind. He will also give his people one heart, and one way; and I pray that you, by your example of union in love, and by all other good means, may be instrumental towards the accomplishment of that promise amongst us. It is only the liberty and protection of the people of God, as such, that is pleaded for; and he that shall set up any thing inconsistent therewith, as so set up, will lay the foundation of his building in the firstborn of his peace, and set up the gate of it in the utmost and last of his welfare. In a word: The people of God may possibly in this nation devour one another, and wash their hands in the blood of one another, by widen-



ing the breaches that are among them; and woe be to them that shall be instrumental herein. But if ever they come to a coalescency in love and truth, it must be by their mutual forbearance of one another, until the spirit be poured down from on high, and the fruits of peace be brought forth thereby. And herein the Lord make you as the mountains that bring forth righteousness, and the little hills that bring forth peace unto his people.

There are some things that I am afraid of, that lye contrary to what I am exhorting you unto. I wish the event manifest that I am afraid without cause. However, give me leave to caution you of them, because I cannot be faithful to my call if I do not.

[1.] Take heed, lest that evil be still abiding upon any of our spirits, that we should be crying out and calling for reformation, without a due consideration of what it is, and how it is to be brought about. I wish one of many of them, who have prayed for it, and complained for want of it, had endeavour'd to carry it on as they might. Would you have a reformation? Be you more humble, more holy, more zealous, delight more in the ways, worship, ordinances of God; reform your persons in your lives, relations, families, parishes, as to Gospel obedience, and you will see a glorious reformation indeed. What mean you by a reformation? Is it the hurting of others, or doing good to our selves? Is it a power over other mens persons, or our own lusts? God hath now for sundry years tried us, whether indeed we love reformation, or no. Have any provoked us, or compelled us to defile the worship of God with ceremonies or superstitions, and our own consciences therewithal? Have we been imposed on in the ways of God by men ignorant of them? Hath not God said to us: You that have prayed under persecution for reformation, you that have fought in the high places of the field for reformation, you that have covenanted and sworn for reformation, go now, reform your selves; you ministers, preach as often as you will, as freely as you please, no man shall controul you, live as holily as you can, pray as often, fast as often as you will, be full of bounty and good works, giving examples to your flock, none shall trouble you, be instant in season, out of season, preach the whole counsel of God without controul; you people, be holy, serve God in holiness, keep close to his worship and ordinances, love them, delight in them, bring forth such fruits as men may glorify God on your account, condemn the world, justify the cause of God by a Gospel conversation, take seven years peace and plenty, and see what you can do? If after all this we still cry out, give us a reformation, and complain not of our own negligence, folly, and hatred of personal reformation, to be the only cause of that want, it is easy to judge what we would have, had we our desires.

[2.] Take heed, lest any who have formerly desired the day of the Lord, considering the purity and holiness wherewith it will be attended, grow weary of it and its work, as not being able to abide it, and so lay aside all thoughts of growing up with it in the will of God: lest any say, Is this the day of the Lord, that holiness, godliness, exact obedience, should be prized, exalted, esteemed; that profaneness, pride, selfishness, formality should be despised, consumed, devoured? We we will have none of this day.

[3.] Take heed that there rise not up a generation that knew not *Joseph*: that knew us not in the days of our distress, and contending with those who would have destroyed us, who were not engaged with us in praying, fasting, fighting in *England, Scotland, and Ireland*; but were unconcerned in all our affairs: who know nothing of the cries, tears, trembling, and fears, wherewith this cause hath been managed. Can we expect that they should be acted by the spirit of it, or have a due sense of what they must be engaged in? What know they of the communion we have had with God in this business all along, what answers he hath given us, what obligations he hath put upon us thereby? The whole business is to them as a story only of that which is past, wherein they are not concerned. There are such abiding impressions left on the souls of as many as have been engaged in the work of God in this nation, from the beginning to the end, as will never be blotted out. If a spirit not sensible of former ways should arise amongst us, and prevail, it would be sad with the interest of Christ, and his people in this nation. To return to my directions:



(2.) Make this work of God your Pole star, that you may steer and guide your course by it. In all your consultations and actions, whatever is proposed, whatever is to be done, let this consideration attend it: But how will it suit the design of God in establishing *Sion*? Men speaking of a thing of manifest evidence say, that it is written with the beams of the sun. Give me leave to tell you of a thing that is written in the prayers of the saints, the fears of your enemies, the condition of this nation, the counsels of princes of the earth, the affairs of the nations abroad in the world, all the issues of the providence of God in these days, all which concurring, I suppose, will give as good an evidence as any thing in the like kind is capable of. What is this, you will say? It is in brief: Let the work of God as stated be your guide in all your consultations, and it will direct you to aim at these two ends.

[1.] To preserve peace, to compose differences, to make-up breaches, to avoid all occasions of divisions at home.

[2.] To make up, unite, gather into one common interest, the protestant nations abroad in the world, that we may stand or fall together, and not be devoured one after another. That these are the things which God calls you to mind, and do, if you will bear any regard to his present work, is, I say, written with all the beams of providence beforementioned. If the Lord should suffer you to be regardless either to the one, or the other, know you not that it would be bitterness in the latter end? Ask your friends what they desire, your enemies what they fear, the nations abroad what they are doing, consider *Babylon*, consider *Sion*, and if one and the same voice come from them all, not to attend unto it, would be not to attend to the voice of God. It is indeed an easy thing for you to gratify Satan, satiate the desire of your enemies, lay a foundation of troubles; it is but attending to the clamours of men without, and the tumultuating of lusts, and carnal wisdom within, and the whole work is done. But to carry on the work of God in the particulars mentioned, this is not so easy a task: self must be denied, many glorious pretences laid aside, contrary reasonings answered, mens weaknesses, miscarriages, failings born withal, because they are men; and which is more than all, our own particular darling desires, it may be, let go unsatisfied, though moulded into contrivances for many years. The truth is, the combinations of the antichristian party in the world are so evident, their successes so notorious, their designs so fixed, their advantages to carry them on so many; that to persuade with them, who have power for that end and purpose, to make it their business, to keep union amongst our selves, on all good and honest terms, and to endeavour the union of all that call on the name of the Lord *Jesus* Christ, their Lord and ours, in the world, were to cast a reproach upon their wisdom, foresight, and zeal: So that it sufficeth me to have mentioned these things.

Use 3. Encourage all things that lye in a tendency and subserviency to the work of God, unfolded and insisted on. For instance,

(1.) Wherever you see any work of real reformation, tending to the advancement of the Gospel, discarding of old useless forms, received by tradition from our fathers, separating the precious from the vile, according to the several measures of light, which God in his infinite wisdom hath graciously imparted; let not needless objections and hindrances lye in the way, but give in all due encouragements to the men of such engagements. Perhaps the business of carrying on reformation is grievous to some, who in their anger and wrath, revenge and disappointment, may make complaints of it to you, in private, or in publick. The Lord give you wisdom, that you may never weaken the hands, or sadden the hearts of men, who are willing to joyn hearts and hands with you to save a poor nation, and to keep life in the work of God in the midst thereof.

(2.) What you find established already in this kind, encourage, preserve, improve, that the work fail not.

(3.) Find out what is wanting, and pursue it, as God gives you advantage and opportunity.

(4.) Where men, under pretence of religion, make it their business to defile themselves, or disturb the civil peace and quiet of others, let them know, that the sword is not born in vain. I can but name these things.

Honourable, my hearts desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be

(2.) but one another, and with their help, in the work of God, by which the



the repairers of breaches, and the restorers of paths for men to walk in; that you may be the preservers of the good old cause of *England*, according to the growth it received in, and under several providential dispensations. Many particulars lye in my heart to propose unto you, but on very many considerations I shall name none at present of them, but close all with some few general directions.

[1.] Secure your spirits, that in sincerity you seek the publick good of the nations, and the prosperity of the good people therein, who have adhered to the good cause of liberty and religion. If this be in your eye, as that which is principally intended, as you may pray in faith, for the presence of God with you, and have a comfortable expectation of his protection and favour; so if in the pursuit of it through human frailty you should err, or mistake in the choice of means, paths, ways tending to that end, God will guide you, and lead you, and not leave you until he hath made strait paths for your feet. But if at the bottom there lye secret animosities, selfwill, desire of obtaining greatness or power, on the one hand, or other; if every such thing be not on all hands subdued unto publick good, prayers will be weakned, carnal wisdom increased, the counsel of God rejected, and you will wander in all your ways without success.

[2.] Keep alive this principle (which whether any will hear, or whether any will forbear, I know not; but this I am sure of, in the latter end it will be found to be true) according as you regard, cleave to, promote, protect, on the one side; or despise, contemn, and oppose on the other, the common interest of *Sion*, the people of God before laid down: so will your affairs either flourish, prosper, and succeed on the one hand; or wither, decay, and be fruitless, on the other. In all other things that shall fall under your consideration, that relate to the civil government of the nations, prudence, conjecture, probability, consideration of circumstances, and the present posture of things may take place, this is capable of no framing to the one hand, or other, upon any pretence whatever.

[3.] If it be possible, keep up a spirit of love, and forbearance among your selves, *love thinketh none evil*. Do not impose designs on one another, and then interpret every thing that is spoken, though in never so much sincerity, and simplicity of spirit, in a proportion to that design: this will turn judgment into wormwood, and truth into hemlock.



SER-



## \* S E R M O N XLI.

God's Prefence with a People, the Spring of their Prosperity; with their special interest in abiding with him.

To the Parliament of the Commonwealth of *England, Scotland, and Ireland*, with the Dominions thereunto belonging.

S I R S,



Y hope that some impression may possibly remain upon your hearts and spirits, of and from the things delivered unto you in the ensuing Sermon, make me willing unto the obedience of presenting it unto you, upon your command; in this manner. Were I not persuaded, that your peace, interest, and concernment is expressed therein, and knew not with what simplicity of heart you were minded thereof, I should have chosen on many accounts to have waved this duty. But having now performed what is incumbent on me, to render this service useful, recommending it yet farther to the grace of God, I humbly beg that it may not in this return unto you, be looked on as a thing of course and so laid aside, but be reviewed with that intension of spirit, which is necessary in duties of this importance; whereby you may manifest that your command unto this service, was grounded on a sense of some advantage to be made by that performance of it. Sundry things I confess, that were spoken unto you, are gone beyond my recovery, having had their rise from the present assistance which God was pleased to afford in the management of the work it self. The sum of what was provided beforehand and no otherwise, without the least addition, is here presented unto you, with hearty desires, that the vision of the truth herein considered may be to them that love you, and the accomplishment thereof be found in the midst of you. So prays

Nov. 17.

Your humblest Servant

in our dear Lord Jesus,

JOHN OWEN.

\* This Sermon was preached to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, at Westminster, Oct. 30, 1656, being a day of Solemn Humiliation.



## 2 CHRON. XV. 2.

And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him; Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin, the Lord is with you, while ye be with him: and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.



I will not, I am sure, seem strange to any, that I have taken a text to preach on in a day of humiliation, out of a thanksgiving sermon, such as this discourse of *Azariah* seems to be; if they shall but consider the suitability of the instruction given therein, to any great and solemn occasion, whether of humiliation, or rejoicing. The words indeed are the sum of all directions that in such cases can be given; the standard of all rules, and exhortations, wherein any nation, or people, in any condition are or may be concerned; so plainly measuring out our fate and lot, the event and issue of our affairs, with all the great undertaking of the people of God in this nation; that of themselves I hope they will make some passage to the hearts of them, to whom the inferences from them shall this day be applied.

In the foregoing chapter we have an account of a great victory, that *Asa* and the people of *Judah* fighting in faith, and with prayer, obtained against the huge host of the *Ethiopians*, with the abundant spoils which they took, and carried away thereupon. In their triumphant return to *Hierusalem* the spirit of God stirs up a prophet to go out, and meet them, to give them an account of the rise, and cause of their success, and direction for their future deportment, under the enjoyment of such mercies and deliverances. The Lord knows how apt even the best of men are to forget the spring of their mercies; how negligent in making suitable returns, by a due improvement of the advantages put into their hands, unto the Lord of all mercies; therefore are they in all seasons to be minded of their proper interest, and duty.

This is done in my text to *Asa* and *Judah* by *Oded*; and I desire in my sermon that it may with the same spirit, and the same success, be done by me unto you. The words I intend principally to insist on, having the same thing for substance three times repeated in them, the opening of the first clause with the general tendency of the whole, will suffice as to their exposition, and the grounding of that general proposition which I shall improve. Two things are then principally to be inquired into.

*First*, What it is for God to be with any people.

*Secondly*, What it is for a people to be, or abide with, God.

And according to the analogy of these two, the following assertions of seeking the Lord, and forsaking him, will be easily understood. For though the words differ in expression, yet they are all of the same way of assertion. They are three hypothetical propositions, or promissory assertions on supposition: If you abide with the Lord, he will be with you; if you seek the Lord, he will be found of you; if you forsake the Lord, he will forsake you: the same matter is trebled, for the fuller and surer confirmation of the thing asserted. Only whereas the last proposition supposeth a thing possible, namely, that they might forsake the Lord; the first supposes a thing present, and therefore it is so expressed, *whilst you are with him*, because they had abode with God in their late war and trial.

Before I enter upon the opening of the words themselves, I cannot pass by the earnest preface of the prophet; *Hear ye me, O Asa*. He saw the people upon their success taken up with many thoughts, thinking of many businesses, full of many contrivances, one imagining one thing, another another, all of them (it may be) how they should use and improve their peace, and success to their advantage, interest, profit, or security. Or the princes, and rulers, as it is probable, and usual



in such cases, might be considering how to carry on their victory, how to make the best advantage of it, in their dealing with neighbouring princes, and nations, in making peace, or war. In the midst of these thoughts, the prophet meets them, and diverts them with all earnestness, to things quite of another nature, and of unspeakable greater importance and concernment to them. *Hear ye me*, saith he, it is not your own counsel, nor your own valour, that hath brought about this great work, this mighty victory; the Lord himself hath done it, by his presence with you. It is not of any concernment unto you, what other nations do, or may do, but the presence of God concerns you alone to look after. The great concernment of any people or nation, is to know, that all their prosperity is from the presence of God amongst them, and to attend to that which will give continuance thereunto. You may tire your selves in the imaginations and contrivances of your own hearts, and lay out your thoughts and time about things that will not profit, nor advantage you, this is your interest, this is your concernment: *Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah, and Benjamin.*

For the words themselves, the first thing proposed to be inquired into for their explanation is this:

*First*, What is it for God to be with a people?

God may be said to be with men, or present with them in sundry respects.

1. He may be said to be with them in respect of the omnipresence of his essence. So he is naturally and necessarily present with all creatures, indistant from them, present with them. The ubiquity and immensity of his essence will not allow that he should be distant from any thing to which he hath given a being. *The heavens, even the heaven of heavens cannot contain him*, 1 Kings viii. 27. Doth he not fill heaven and earth? Is he a God at hand only, and not afar off, as to the ends of the earth? This presence of God with all things *David* emphatically declares, *Psal.* cxxxix. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. But it is not that, that is here intended, that is universal to all creatures, natural; and necessary, this especial to some, voluntary, and of mercy: that of nature and essence, this of will and operation.

2. God may be said to be with one in respect of personal union. So he was with, and only with the man Jesus Christ, *Acts* x. 38. *Θεὸς ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ*, *God was with him*: that is, in personal union, the human nature being taken into subsistence with the Son of God.

3. God is present, or with any, in respect of the covenant of grace. He is with them to be their God in covenant; the tenor whereof is, that he will not leave them, nor shall they forsake him, he will be for them, and they shall be for him, and not for another. He is with them for all the ends of mercy, love, kindness, pardon, salvation, that are proposed, and exhibited in it. But neither is this the presence of God here intended; though this be something that flows from it, and does attend it. For,

(1.) That presence of God with his people hath not such a conditional establishment, as this here mentioned; it stands on other terms, and better security, than that here proposed; it hath received an eternal ratification in the blood of Christ, is founded in the immutable purpose of Grace, and is not left to the conditionality here expressed, as we shall see afterwards.

(2.) The presence here mentioned respects the whole body of the people, all *Judah* and *Benjamin* in their national state, and consideration, unto whom, as such, the effectual covenant of grace was never extended: for they were not all *Israel* who were of *Israel*.

(3.) The presence here promised respects immediately the peculiar end of blessing the whole people with success in their wars, and undertakings, so the occasion of the words, and the context, with regard to the following discourse do undeniably evince. It is not then this presence of God only that is intended, though, as it will afterward appear, it is not to be separated from it.

4. There is a presence of God in respect of providential dispensations. And this is twofold:

(1.) General; ordering, disposing, guiding, ruling all things, according to his own wisdom, by his own power, unto his own glory. Thus he is also present with all the world; he disposes of all the affairs of all the sons of men, as he pleaseth; sets

up



up one, and pulls down another; changes times, seasons, kingdoms, bounds of nations, as seems good to him. The help that is given to any, he doth it himself. The shields of the earth belong unto God, he works deliverance in the earth, even among them that know him not. And the evils, desolations, and destruction, that the earth is full of, are but the effects of his wrath and indignation, revealing its self against the ungodliness of men. He is thus present with every person in the world, holds his breath, and all his ways in his hand; disposes of his life, death, and all his concerns, as he pleaseth. He is present in all nations, to set them up, pluck them down, alter, turn, change, weaken, establish, strengthen, enlarge their bounds, as he sees good; and the day is coming, when all his works will praise him. Neither is this here intended: it is necessary, and belongs to God, as God, and cannot be promised to any; it is a branch of God's natural dominion, that every creature be ruled, and disposed of, agreeably to its nature, unto the end whereunto it is appointed.

(2.) Special; attended with peculiar love, favour, good will, special care towards them with whom he is so present. So *Abimelech* observed that he was with *Abraham*, Gen. xxi. 22. *God is with thee in all that thou doest*: with thee, to guide thee, bless thee, preserve thee, as we shall see afterwards. So he promised to be with *Joshua*, chap. i. 5. And so he was with *Gideon*, Judges vi. 12. to bless him in his great undertaking. And so with *Jeremiah*, chap. xv. 20. This is fully expressed *Isai.* xliii. 1, 2. *I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the water, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.*

And this is the presence of God here intimated: his presence with the people, as to special providential dispensations, as is manifest from the whole discourse of the prophet; and wherein this consists, shall be afterwards at large declared.

*Secondly*, What is a people's abiding with God?

There is a twofold abiding with God:

1. In personal obedience, according to the tenor of the covenant. This is not here intended, but supposed. There is no abiding in any thing with God, where there is not an abiding in this thing: yet this, as I said, is not here principally intended, but supposed; something farther is intended: for as hath been declared, it is national work, and national abiding, that is intended. So that,

2. There is an abiding with God in national administrations: this is a fruit of the other, in those who are called to them. And that this is principally here intended, is evident from that use, that *Asa* made of this information, and exhortation of the prophet. He did not only look to his personal walking thereupon; but also immediately set upon the work of ordering the whole affairs of the kingdom, so as God might be glorified thereby. How this may be effected shall at large afterwards be declared: what hath already been spoken may suffice for a foundation of that proposition, which I shall this day insist upon: and it is this:

*Observ.* The presence of God with a people, in special providential dispensations for their good, depends on their obediential presence with him, in national administrations to his glory.

For the explication of this proposition some few things are to be premised.

1. The presence of God with his people as to special grace in the covenant, and his presence with them as to special assistance in providence, proceed on very different accounts.

(1.) They have a very different rise. The foundation, and principal law of special grace, dispensed in the covenant is this; that some sinned, and another was punished. So it is laid down expressly, *Isai.* liii. 6. *All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* 2 Cor. v. 21. *He was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.* Gal. iii. 13, 14. *A curse for us, that the blessing of faithful Abraham might come on them that believe.* 1 Pet. ii. 24. This is the great and sovereign principle of the covenant of grace, that a commutation should be made of persons, as to punishments, and rewards; that sinners should be provided of a substitute, one that should undergo the punishment due to them, that they might go free; and procure a reward for them who could procure none for themselves.



Now the supreme and sovereign law of providential dispensations is utterly divers, and alien from this of the covenant of grace. This you have asserted, *Exek. xviii. 20. The soul that sinneth it shall die: one shall not bear the iniquity of another: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.* Take this for a law of universal right and indispensable, extend it to the covenant of grace, and it is absolutely exclusive of the substitution and satisfaction of Christ. But it is the ground, rule, and law, of providential dispensations, that God is there treating about; and vindicating his dealing with any people as to his presence with them, and acting towards them therein, which is divers, as you see, from the foundation of the covenant before-mentioned.

(2.) As the foundations are divers, so is the rule of their continuance. What is the rule and measure of God's continuance with his people in the covenant of grace? Plainly this: that he will never forsake them; and on that account will take care that they shall never forsake him, but abide with him for ever. It is not whilst they do so, and so, he will abide with them, and when they cease so to do, he will forsake them, as to his federal and covenant presence: there is not such a sandy foundation left us, of our abiding with God in Christ. See the tenor of the covenant, *Jer. xxxi. 33. chap. xxxii. 38, 39, 40.* The sum is, that God will be with them, and take care that they always abide with him; and therefore hath he provided for all interveniencies imaginable, that nothing shall violate this union. God lays his unchangeableness as the foundation of the covenant, *Mal. iii. 6.* and he therein makes us unchangeable; not absolutely so, for we change every moment; but with respect to the terms and bounds of the covenant, he hath undertaken, that we shall never leave him. The law of God's presence in respect of providential dispensations, and all special privileges attending it, is quite of another importance: it is purely conditional, as you may see in my text. The tenor of it is expressed to the height, *1 Sam. ii. 30. I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, that be far from me; for them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.* Here is no alteration of counsel, or purpose in God; but merely an explanation of the rule, law, and tenor of providential dispensations; no interpretation of the covenant of grace. *Eli* held not the priesthood by that covenant, but an explication of the tenor of a privilege given in special providence, *Psal. lxxix. 32, 33.* Hence is that variety of God's dealings with men, mentioned in the Scripture, which yet are always righteous, according to one or other of these rules, and laws, *Isai. xliii. 23, 24:* says God of his people: *Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings, neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities.* What then shall be done with this people? depart from them, destroy them, let them dye? No, *v. 25. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* So also *chap. lvii. v. 17. For the iniquity of his covetousness I was wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on forwardly in the way of his heart.* Surely now God will utterly consume them, root and branch, as persons incorrigible, and irrecoverable. No, the case is quite otherwise, *v. 18, 19. I have seen his way, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comfort to him: I will pity him, pardon him, save, sanctify him, and fill him with consolation.* Go now to *Ezekiel, chap. xxxiii. 18. When the righteous turns from his righteousness, what then? God will heal him and restore comforts unto him, as it was in the places beforementioned.* No no: he shall die, he shall be cut off. What is the reason of this diversity? Why, in the first place God speaks of his dealings unto their souls as to his covenant of grace, and all the mercies of it; in this last, as to his dealings with their persons, and their outward concerns, in the dispensations of his providence. And the not heeding hereof hath made some pronounce inconsiderately, the covenant of grace to be merely conditional, because they find many mercies and privileges spoken of under such a notion; not considering that all



all those proposals belong to the law of outward providence, and not to the nature of the covenant of promise, established in the blood of Christ. And unless this be allowed, nothing can be more contrary to my text, than that promise, and such as that which we have *Isai. liv. 9.* where provision is made for God's abiding with his people, notwithstanding all their backslidings, and provocations; which he will so far heal, as that he may not forsake them. And this is first to be observed, that we do not in the consideration of God's presence and with-drawings, as to providential dispensations, cast any reflection on the stability, and unchangeableness of the covenant of grace. *David* hath fully stated this business, *2 Sam. xxiii. 5.* saith he, *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.* *David* had a promise for the prosperity of his house; he had also an ingagement of the sure mercies of the covenant, the different tenor of these engagements, as to their success and establishment, he gives us this account of: The covenant is absolute and unchangeable, that is, ordered in all things and sure; the prosperity of his house depends on another law and rule, that is subject to alteration.

2. Observe the nature of this dependance of God's presence on our abiding with him. It doth not depend upon it, as the effect upon its proper cause, as though it were procured by it, merited by it; we enjoy not the least morsel of bread on any such account, much less such eminent privileges as attend God's special providential presence. We deserve nothing at the hand of God; and therefore if he should take us in the midst of the choicest obedience, and fill us with the fiercest of miseries, he did us no wrong; and therefore the Lord does so deal sometimes with his; and that not only with particular persons, as in the case of *Job*, but also with his people in general, as *Psal. xlv. 17, 18, 19.* *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way. Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.* Though he requires our duty at our hands, yet he is not tied to any such present reward. This is all: it ordinarily depends upon it as a consequent upon an antecedent, which allows an interposition of grace, and mercy, as *Nehemiah ix. 19.* *Nevertheless thou being merciful forsookest them not.* So elsewhere that good man prays: *Remember me for good, and spare me according to the multitude of thy mercies.* For the glory of his righteousness, and of his ways in the world, God hath ordered, that his people shall walk with him, when he abides eminently and conspicuously in a special manner with them.

3. Observe, that our abiding with God, even in national administrations, is the proper effect of his presence with us in covenant dispensations; so that all in the issue is of meer mercy, and grace: though the condition seems to be imposed on us, yet it is from him alone that we have strength for its performance. It is in this, and such like cases, as *David* said it was with them, at their dedicating their silver and gold for the building of the temple: *ra ca, ix raiv coiv, of thine own, Lord, have we given unto thee;* we do but return him his own, we give him but the fruits of his own grace; and without it we can make no return what-ever.

These things being premis'd, I shall give the *Proposition* some confirmation, and so descend to the due improvement of it.

I suppose I need not go for proof, beyond the observation of the constant tenor of God's proceedings with his people of old. When did he not deal thus with them? What instance can be given of transgressing this rule? Is the whole story of the nation of the *Jews* any thing, but the illustration of this proposition? Some ruled well, and sought the Lord; and the Lord was with them, and prospered them in all their ways: some fell from him, and walked according to their own imaginations; and the Lord cut them short on that account. Yea, sometimes the same man, as *Solomon, Aza, Uzziab,* experienced both these states, and conditions. Hath not the state of all nations, since they came into the power of men, professing the knowledge of him, been the same? Look on the *Roman* empire, did it not flourish under the hand of men who rul'd with God, and were faithful with the saints? Is not the present distraction of it, under the fury and



cruelty of *Turk* and *Pope*, the issue of the violence, unrighteousness, idolatry, luxury, and persecution of ill governors? Doth not the demonstration of all God's people in the world, the consideration whereof in particular might be insisted on as the ground and reason of the truth insisted on, require that it should be thus? *Leviticus* xxvi. and almost the whole *Book* of *Deuteronomy*, are sermons on this text, and every *verse* almost in them, would afford a new confirmation of the truth in hand. I shall need rather than to caution from mistakes, than farther to confirm the proposition. For this end, take these ensuing observations.

1. All outward flourishing, or prosperity of a people, doth not always argue the special presence of God with them. There are sundry things required to make success and prosperity an evidence of the presence of God.

(1.) That the people themselves prospered be his people, his peculiar. How many wicked nations are there in the world, that for a long season have received blessings (as it were) and success in their undertakings? Is the Lord amongst them by his special presence? Not at all. He is using them indeed for his own end and purposes, to break others; or fill up the measure of their own iniquities; that their destruction may be an evident demonstration of his vengeance, and righteous judgments to all the world; but present with them in the sense contended about, he is not. The case is stated, *Hab.* i. ii. as you may see in those chapters at large. It is the same case with the antichristian, and *Mahometan* nations, in the world at this day. Their prosperity is no evidence of God's presence, because themselves are his enemies. Other bottoms, reasons, and grounds there are of their successes; God's owning of them, is none of them.

(2.) That the whole work be good, and have a tendency to God's glory; wherein they are engaged. *David's* counsel for the killing of *Uriah* prospered, and took effect; yet was not God with him therein. The work engaged in must be according to his mind. And,

(3.) Made useful and subservient to his glory. When the hearts of a people can secure themselves in these things, then may they rejoice in their prosperity, as a pledge of God's presence with them.

2. Even great afflictions, eminent distresses, long perplexities, may have a consistency with God's special presence. Though the wheel goes on, yet it may have a cross wheel in it, that may cause rubs and disturbances. The rule of God's acting in his presence is his own wisdom, and our good in the issue, not our partial self-destroying desires. Had the best people in the world all their own desires, they would be every way ruined. When God is nigh to us, he knows what is best for us. Security from destroying evils, not trying evils, he gives to them, with whom he is.

And this is all that I shall offer for the explication, confirmation and cautioning of the proposition insisted on; what remains farther to be opened, will fall in under the *Uses* of it, which now ensue.

*Use* 1. This special presence of God being, as you have heard, the great and only concernment of any people, the tenor, or condition thereof, being our abiding with him; let our first *Use* be to instruct us particularly,

(1.) What this special presence of God is, and wherein it doth consist.

(2.) What it is for us to abide with God, so as we may enjoy it.

(1.) For the full discovery of the first, I shall consider it in that eminent instance, wherein of old he did grant his presence to his people. The bottom of that stupendous undertaking of the *Israelites* in leaving *Egypt*, and journeying through the wilderness into *Canaan*, lay in the promise of this presence of God with them, *Exod.* vii. 10, 11, 12. On this one consideration their whole undertaking and affair turned; to this issue it is put by *Moses*, *Exod.* xxxiii. 15. *If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence:* they will not move one step without him; and with him they care not whither they go.

Now this presence of God with them, symbolically did consist in, or rather was represented by, two things: [1.] The pillar of the cloud, and fire, which was with them ordinarily. [2.] The appearance of his glory which they enjoyed on extraordinary occasions.

[1.] The first, with the first use of it, is mentioned, *Exod.* xiii. 21, 22. *And the Lord went before them by day in the pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way,*



way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, to go by day and night: he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day; nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people. There is mention here as if it were of two pillars, one by day, and another by night, but it seems to have been the same pillar with several properties. For chap. xiv. 19, 20. the same pillar at the same time, performs both these offices, in respect of several persons; to some it was on the one side a cloud and darkness, to others bright and shining as fire. *The pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians, and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud of darkness to them, and it gave light by night to these.* After this, when the ark was made, and the tabernacle erected, this cloud, which until then went before the camp, came and covered the tabernacle night and day, as it stood in the midst of the camp, or the congregation; as a cloud it was by day, and as a pillar of fire by night, *Exod. xl. 34, 35, 36, 37, 38.* and there it continued with the people all the while they were in the wilderness, *Nehem. ix. 19.* This being the first eminent pledge of the presence of God with that people, let us consider what was indulged or granted to them thereby.

1.) They had hereby constant direction in all their journeyings, and undertakings; they were by this pillar directed in their way: so at large it is expressed, *Numbers x. 33.* as also, *Exod. xl.* God by this pledge of his presence was the beginning of all their rest and motion, the guide and director of all their undertakings; so that they moved, acted, rested, proceeded, according to his will and counsel. He guided them by his eye, and led them by his counsel. Sometimes perhaps they would be forward, they would be up, acting, doing, their hearts are full of desires, and they are impatient of delay. If it be not according to his mind, he will cause a cloud to abide on their tabernacle, or their assemblies and meetings; a cloud that shall darken them, and distract them in their consultations, that they shall not be able to take one step forward. Though their desires be great, their intentions good, yet the cloud shall be upon them, and they shall not know their way. Sometimes perhaps they are heavy, fearful, slothful, there is a Lion in the way, giants are in the land, difficulties, and perplexities lye in the way before them in such and such undertakings, they have no heart to them, the way is long, and perilous, better return than go forward. Would God now have them pass on, and engage? The cloud shall break up, and go before them, they shall see so far on their way, as to go forth with cheerfulness. Only observe this, that when the cloud was taken up, they knew they were to go on in the way wherein they were, and journeyed accordingly; yet they know not whither they should go, nor what would be the end of their journey. And therefore it is said, that when they journeyed the ark went before them to seek out a resting place for them, *Numb. x. 33.* It was carried on, to see where the pillar, or cloud of direction would stay, and there they rested wherever it was. When God gives a people so much direction, as that they see it is their duty to go on, and to trust him in so doing, though they see not the end, nor know what their resting place will be, yet it is a pledge of God's presence with them. I suppose in your assembly you have had the cloud taken off, as to your engagements in some undertakings, concerning which you are to trust, that the ark of God's presence, the Lord Jesus Christ, will find you out a resting place, which as yet appears not unto you.

What a full experience have we had of this kind of proceeding among us? In the last assembly of Parliament how many had no less real intentions to be at work for God, than now? God saw that it would not be for the advantage of the people, that they should proceed; hence the cloud rested on that assembly, that they could not see how to take one step forward. He was still present with us, but it was by a darkning cloud, that we could not journey towards our rest. Nor is it the will, or counsel of man, but of God, that is to be looked to in these things. We now hope the cloud is up, and we are journeying towards our rest. The great Angel of his presence will find a rest for us in the good providence of God. This then lies in God's special presence, he is with us to give us direction in all our undertakings; to take away darkness, perplexities, difficulties from our counsels; or to cause us to rest, and cease from whatever may come into our hearts, that is not according to his mind. The Lord give us evermore of this his presence.

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I cannot stay to shew you the several ways whereby God now communicates direction to a people; how he inclines their hearts insensibly, yet powerfully; fixes the bent of their spirits effectually, their hearts being in his hand as the rivers of water, which he turns as he pleaseth; supplies them with reasonings and consultations, beyond the verge of their own wisdom, proposes occasions, invitations, provocations; gives them spirit and courage beyond their natural frames, and tempers; enlarges them in prayer, or shuts them up; makes walls on the one hand, and open paths on the other; with innumerable such ways, and means, as in his infinite wisdom he is pleased to make effectual for their guidance. It suffices, that in the use of means, through patience and waiting upon him, they shall be directed to that which is pleasing to him: so is he with them.

2.) The second use of this pillar was, to give them protection and defence in all their ways: so *Exod.* xiv. 19, 20, 24. This protected them from the *Egyptians*, and from thence God troubled their enemies, out of the pillar, that is, from his especial presence. This use of it is insisted on *Isai.* iv. 5, 6. The cloud that was as smoke by day, and as fire by night, was also a shadow, a place of refuge, and a covert: in one word, a protection, or a defence.

And this is a second thing which is in God's special presence: he will protect, or defend them, with whom he is so present. He is their dwelling place, *Psal.* xc. then when in this world they have none: their refuge in the time of trouble; so *Isai.* xxv. 4. xxvi. 1. xxxi. 4. Promises and instances to make this good abound, are known to all: the time would fail me to insist upon them. I might go over all the causes, means, and ways of the fears, dangers, ruins of such a people, and shew you how a defence is provided against them all. Are their fears from themselves, because of their folly, weakness, and division; or from pretended friends, because of their envy and desertion; or from open enemies, because of their power, cruelty, malice, and revenge? A defence is provided on every account, heat, rain, tempests, storms, adversity, prosperity, all are provided against, where God is present, *Isai.* xxxii. 1, 2.

And if any people in the world have experience of this truth, we have it this day. Had not the Lord been with us, who had not destroyed us? Enemies, friends, abroad, at home, our own follies, all, any of them had done the work, had not the Lord himself been with us.

Only observe, that the presence of God, as to these effects, may sometimes in some particulars be eclipsed, and the effects themselves for some season be intangled, though there be not an utter breach between him and his people. How often did the *Israelites* attempt things without his direction? How often did he break in upon them to their woe and sorrow? Yet for the main he forsook them not, until the great work intended by them was accomplished, *Nehem.* ix. 19. It is not every intanglement, every disappointment, every defeat, that argues God's departure, as to his special presence. It may be good for us sometimes to be in such a condition; and then that desertion, that carries into it, is from the presence of God. We are now grown to that, that if every thing immediately surmount not our imagination, say some: God is gone from them: not because it is so, but because they would have it so. But he is merciful, with whom we have to do, and will not cast off his people for ever.

[2.] The people with whom God was, had the glory of *Jehovah*, as a pledge of his presence with them. This appeared only at extraordinary seasons, so it did at the giving of the law, *Exod.* xxiv. 16. so also at the setting up of the tabernacle. It differed from the cloud; for when the cloud was upon the tabernacle, the glory of the Lord filled it. It appeared again to all the people, *Levit.* ix. 23. I shall not now enquire, what was this visible representation of the Majesty of God; it sufficeth, as to the purpose in hand, that when God gives his presence to a people, at extraordinary seasons, he affords them extraordinary manifestations of his glory. So in *Ezekiel's* vision of those dreadful wheels of providence, the glory of the Lord is said to appear in the temple; and as his especial presence departed from the temple, and the city, so the glory by several degrees departed also, *chap.* ii. 10, 18, 19. xi. 23.

Eminent and glorious appearances with, and for a people in extraordinary seasons, is then another thing that accompanies God's special providential presence with them;



them; when they are at an utter loss in their counsels, at a stand in their motions, disappointed in their undertakings, deserted in their enterprises, pressed on every side above measure, or called to some extraordinary work, so that their ordinary direction and protection will not carry them on, nor bear them up; then will God relieve them by some especial appearance of his glory. In the *mount will the Lord be seen*. This will give a relief when all is at a loss. And in this lies the most discriminating evidence of special providence. Glorious appearances in great streights are eminent testimonies of God's regard.

Could I now insist on some of the instances that might be given of this kind of dealing with us in *England*, in the pursuit of the cause we have in hand, it would make us ashamed of all our unworthiness, carnal fears, and unbelief.

This is the second evidence of God's presence. He is with a people to direct them, to protect, to manifest his glory amongst them; his glory in balancing the issues of providence one in respect of another, so that all shall acknowledge, that of a truth the Lord is amongst them. *Blessed is the people that is in such a case; yea, blessed is the people whose God is the Lord*. What would you have more? Here is ease of all cares, a remedy for all sores, security in the midst of troubles, rest, and peace, and assured dwelling places, though the *Assyrian* should be in the land.

Thus you see what is this great concernment of any people.

(2.) Let us now consider the tenure of this blessedness, on what account it is to be obtained, or enjoyed. Now this is, our abiding with God. This then is nextly to be considered, what it is for a people, what it is for you, and us, so to abide with God, as that we may in all our affairs enjoy his presence in the ways before described.

Now something is hereunto previously required: something it consists in.

[1.] That we may abide with God, this is indispensibly required: That we may have peace with him in *Jesus Christ*. If we are never with him, we cannot abide with him; no man can abide where he never comes. The acceptance of our persons lies at the bottom of the acceptance of our duties. As the special presence of God with any is in and by Christ, and no otherwise; so is our abiding with God in and through him. *God with us* is the name of Christ: our being with God is in him, who is our peace. *Two cannot walk together, unless they be so agreed*, Amos iii. 3.

Now because this is not to be expected from all the individuals of a nation, yet this thing is to be endeavoured. That the rulers of it be such as have this interest. I do not divest of a share in government those, who have no share in Christ, if lawfully called thereunto. But, I say, when God gives governors, whom he intends to make a blessing unto a people, they shall be such as are blessed of him in Christ. And if ever the government of this nation, in this present constitution, suppose it the most exactly framed, and balanced, in the several parts of it, for the furtherance of publick good, be devolved into the hands of men not interested in God by Christ; though the constitution may be absolutely good; yet the government will not be blessed, and the nation will be ruined: for God and his glory will depart, *Micah* v. 5, 6. It is Christ that is our peace, even in outward troubles. They are *seven shepherds under him*, and *eight principal men* accepted with him, that are to be our relief.

It is true, for some particular actions or works a wicked man may be anointed particularly; as *Jehu*; and *Jeroboam* the son of *Joash*. But you have no instance, that ever God was with a people to bless them indeed, in a course of special providence, when wicked men by their own consent were their rulers, where the union and relation between them and the people is considerable. I confess unto you, I never think of the state of *England*, but my heart trembles at this thing; namely, that those who have, and it is fit should have, so great a share in the government of this commonweal, should have their rise from the body of the people, that is dark, and profane, and full of enmity against the remnants. Did not God over-rule men, contrary to their own inward principles and lusts, how soon would ruin and desolation break in upon that hand? And give me leave to say, that God in his sovereign providence, having called so many at this time to the place of rule and authority, who indeed (as we believe) love the Lord *Jesus* in sincerity; it seems to me to look as your duty, to consider all ways and means, whereby the power of these



nations may be in succeeding seasons devolved on men of the like spirit and condition.

I shall not interpose in that, which by some is so much spoken of, the reign of the saints. I am sure, the means used, and attempted by some, to set upon, and to set up such a rule and dominion, have not become sober men, much less saints of Christ. Yet this I must say, and in the saying of it, I dare say, *Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah, and Benjamin*; if ever God cease to call saints, that is, men interested personally in Christ, to places of chief authority in this nation, or commit the power of it into other hands; and when those called to power, cease to exert it in a subserviency to the kingdom of Christ, for the true spiritual advantage of his people, there will be an end of *England's* glory and happiness. I say; Hear ye this, all ye people. This I have deliver'd long ago, and many times in this place, this I say still, and in this persuasion hope to live and die. The Lord guide you in this thing: however we shall live on the good providence of our God, who hath hitherto taken care for us.

This then, I say, is pre-requir'd, as a qualification of any person to the performance of this duty of abiding with God. It is the *Psalmist's* advice, *Psal. ii. 11, 12*. Let this principle be always owned amongst you, by it honour Christ in the world, give him the preeminence, it is the Father's will he should have it in all things. Expect not the presence of God, but upon this account. Bear testimony herein against the world of profane men, who despise these things. Seeing then it cannot be expected to have this qualification diffused universally, as yet, through the body of the people; let the rulers take care, that they be not the cause of God's departure from us.

[2.] What is it now for such persons to abide with God, so as they may expect comfortably the continuance of his presence with them, which is their all, that they need or desire? I shall name some few things that are signally required thereunto.

1.) That they enquire of God, ask counsel at his hand, look to him for direction in all their affairs. He is present with them to give them direction: not to seek for it at his hand, is exceedingly to despise him. It must arise from one of these two apprehensions; either he cares not for us, or he knows not how to direct us. When he gave direction by the cloud on the tabernacle, the people being reprov'd for their carnal fears, and unbelief, upon the return of the spies, some of them would needs instantly into the mountain, and fight with the *Canaanites*: but says the Holy Ghost, *the ark abode in the camp*; they went without God's direction, and prospered accordingly. With what contempt doth God speak of the wisdom and counsels of the sons of men, when they will adhere unto them? How does he make it his glory to turn all their consultations into folly, and to make them err in their ways, like a drunken man? How doth he bid them take counsel together, when he intends to destroy them? What instances may be given of all good and prosperous rulers of old, of their seeking direction from God? What promises of a success, and a blessed issue in so doing are there? The words of my text will suffice, as an instance in every kind.

But you will say: How shall we enquire of God?

The nations had their oracles, whereby they deluded themselves. The people of God had their *Urim* and *Thummim*, their prophets and oracle. Bring hither the ephod, and enquire of God, was the word with them. But alas, what is all this to the advantage we have of seeking counsel of God, and taking direction from him? We have an High Priest always present with us, by whom we may enquire. Our High Priest is the Angel of God's presence, the mighty Counsellor, the power, and eternal wisdom of God himself. And where is he? He appears in the presence of God for us, in the holy place, not made with hands, having made a new and living way for us to come within the vail, to enquire of the Oracle. What would we have more? He is our Captain, our Leader, our High Priest, *Urim* and *Thummim*, our Oracle, our Ark, on whom the cloud of direction rests and abides for ever. Would you then be with God? Take direction from him by Christ in all your undertakings; so do in deed, and not in word, or profession only.

I hope, I need not stay to give you directions how this duty is to be performed. The unction will teach it you, and your fellowship, I hope, is with the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus. Only now take these few words with you.



(1. Captivate all your desires to his glory. Set your hearts on nothing, but with this express reserve, if it is consistent with, and expedient unto the glory of Christ, and his kingdom. Be not sick of your own violent desires; but lay all your aims and designs at his feet always, becoming as weaned children before him.

(2. Bear before him a real sense of your own weakness and folly, both severally and jointly, if not directed by him, that in his pity and compassion he may relieve you.

(3. Keep your hearts in that integrity, that you may always press and urge him with his own concernment in all your affairs. This is a thing that none but upright hearts can do uprightly.

(4. Actually enquire by faith and prayer, what is his will and mind; do it severally and jointly; do it privately, publicly; do it every day, and in days set apart for that purpose: he will assuredly be found of you. You know how easy it were to exemplify all these things by testimonies and instances; but time will not permit.

If instead of these things, you bear yourselves up on the wings of your own wisdom, and contrivances; though you may seem for a season to have attained a fair pitch and flight, you will be entangled, and brought down in the midst of your course with shame and sorrow: for the Lord will not be with you.

2.) Another thing, wherein we are to be with God, is by trusting in him for protection. *O, trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength. This man made the Lord his refuge. He that trusteth in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion, that shall never be removed. Commit your ways to the Lord, roll your burden on him, stand still and see his salvation.* What glorious things are spoken of this trusting to the Lord for protection, you all know. It were endless to insist on commands and promises to this purpose; and to single out one or two, were but to weaken the cause in hand, seeing hereunto the whole Scriptures bear witness. I shall only shew you what it is so to do, in some few particulars.

(1. It is to strengthen and encourage your hearts in difficult affairs, a comfortable issue whereof you cannot on visible causes conjecture, on the account of God's engagement for your good. To omit the instance of *Asa*, *Jehosaphat*, and many others; take that signal one of *David* in his great distress at *Ziklag*, 1 Sam. xxx. You know the story: his habitation was burnt and spoiled, his wives and children captiv'd, his people consulting to stone him, so that he was greatly distressed, the enemy numerous, and without his reach; all means of relieving his condition, and bringing it to a comfortable issue, far removed. But what course did he now take? did he despond? did he give over? did he rest on his own counsel and strength? No, saith the Holy Ghost: but *David encouraged himself in the Lord his God*. Have you any affair that lies before you that is good and honest; but yet dreadful, difficult, entangled? Your hearts are ready to faint whenever you think of it; it is almost beyond your imaginations to contrive a comfortable issue. In such a season if you will be with God, he will be with you: if you so trust him, as to encourage your hearts on the account of his wisdom, goodness, power, that he can find out, and bring about a comfortable glorious end; this is to trust him for protection. *Psal. xlv.* is this doctrine deliver'd to the full.

(2. To trust God for protection, is to wait under discouragements, and disappointments for a desired issue of the affairs we commit to him. *He that believeth will not make haste*, Isa. xxviii. 16. This the Lord pleads for, *Hab. ii. 3, 4*. Men will have their desires precisely accomplished this year, this month, this week, or they will wait no longer: these, says God, are proud men, their hearts are lifted up in them, they trust not to me for protection. Men love to trust God (as they profess) for what they have in their hands, in possession, or what lies in an easy view; place their desires afar off, carry their accomplishment behind the clouds, out of their sight, interpose difficulties and perplexities, their hearts are instantly sick, they cannot wait for God; they do not trust him, nor ever did. Would you have the presence of God with you? Learn to wait quietly for the salvation you expect from him. Then indeed is he glorified, when he is trusted in a storm, when he is waited for under long perplexities and distresses. Want of this ruin'd the *Israelites* in the wilderness; their work was long, their difficulties and intanglements many; they would have had an immediate end of their troubles. What! more difficulties, more hardships! Nay, then let us *chuse a captain, and go down again into Egypt*; we know the worst of that



that, where this will end we know not. This laid their carcasses in the wilderness, and deprived them of enjoying the good land.

(3. It is to commit your affairs to the Lord with submission to his will, as to their issue and accomplishment. Trust respects protection, but it prescribes not, as to particular events. It is to commit our affairs to God with thoughts of his infinite wisdom, sovereignty, and goodness; with resolutions thereupon, that the product of his will, is that which will be good, be best for us, though it should not at all fall in with our present desires. It is true, the *Psalmist* says: *Commit your ways unto the Lord, trust also in him, he shall bring it to pass*, Psal. xxxvii. 5. And so he shall, and will in all such cases, as that there particularly insisted on by the *Psalmist*, wherein his own glory is particularly engaged. But this prescribes not as to all cases, that we should cry: *Give me this child, or I die*. The rule is known; abide in this frame, and we shall have that we desire, or that which is better for us: but I must not abide in these things. See *Psal.* xxxvii. 3, 4, 5. *Psal.* lxxiii. 23, 24, 25, 26.

And these are some of those ways wherewith we abide with God, as to our trusting of him in reference to special protection.

[3.] A third thing I should fix upon is, a people's universal owning of God's concernments in the world. His presence with them is, his owning their concernments; and certainly he expects that they abide with him in the owning of his. God's concernment in the world is his people, as invested with the privileges purchased for them by Christ, *Deut.* xxxii. 9. The Lord's portion is his people. This is that which the Lord has particularly kept to himself; the vineyard that he has chosen out of all the forests of the world; the handful that he hath taken to himself, his sons, and daughters, his family; these he expects that you should abide by, if you would have him abide by you: yea, it is most certain, as your respect and regard shall be to them and their interest, as his people; so will his respect, and regard be to you, and your interest, as the people of this nation. But I have formerly spoken hereof unto you, and therefore, though it be a matter of the greatest importance, I shall not farther insist upon it.

And these are some of the conditions of God's special presence with you. Pleasant conditions! their performance is your glory, your rest, your blessedness; not your bondage, not your burden. Not one duty doth God on this account require of you, but it is also your reward. O blessed terms of peace and agreement! Blessed be the great Peacemaker; cursed be the breakers of this blessed agreement. Is this all indeed that is required, that we may have the special presence of God with us for ever? O how inexcusable shall we be, if we neglect these terms? how just will be our ruin? Behold, I have set before you life and death this day; the life or death of these nations. O choose life, seeing it may be had on such easy, such blessed terms; terms wherein in doing good to others, you will also do good to your own souls; you will give peace to the nation, and have peace and rest in your own souls.

*Use 2.* Look on this presence of God as your main concernment. This is that which the prophet calls for in the words of the text. So the *Psalmist*: *There are many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us*, Psal. iv. Let other men make what enquiries they please, look for good, for rest, for peace in what they best fancy; acquiesce you in this, that the light of God's countenance, a pledge of his presence with you, is that alone which you are to enquire after. I remember since the beginning of these last wonderful days, how often we have thought ourselves utterly ruin'd: if such alterations come, we are undone; if such men die, fall off, oppose, there is little hope of carrying on the work wherein we are engaged; if such shakings, such divisions befall us, our ruin is at hand. If we break with such and such foreign nations, what hope remaineth? But alas, we have found by experience, that our affairs have turned on none of these things; our prosperity hath been built on none of those principles: such desertions, as we feared, have happened; such alterations, such divisions have befallen us; we have been sometime almost reduced to *Gideon's* number; such breaches with foreign nations have ensued: one party, that was with us, have gone off, and asked, what will ye now do? and then another party hath gone off, and asked us, what will ye do now? And no sooner do any fall off, but instantly they expect, and foretel destruction to them that do abide; as though they were God, and not man; or as though God were bound to follow them with his presence in all their passions, in

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all their wanderings. It would, I confess, be more desirable unto me, than life it self, to see all those at least, who stick to the cause of God in its greatest difficulties and trials, and then when it ceased to be carried on in the ordinary paths of nations, united again in the same common interest; to see their passions and prejudices cured, and their persons returned to their former usefulness. But this is that which is the result of all this discourse: it is not this, or that thing, or any thing whatever, but the presence of God alone with a people, that is their life, their preservation, their protection and prosperity. If our strength had lain in any thing else in this world, our light had gone out long ago, and it had departed from us: but hence it is, that we are not consumed. Now if you are so careful not to lose these, and these friends, this, and that party of the nation, not to provoke this, or that people causelessly; oh, what weight ought it to have upon your hearts and souls, that you provoke not the Lord to depart from you, that you take care for the continuance of his presence with you? This is your life, your safety, your success, your peace. Learn to prize it, value it.

*Use 3.* Whilst you have any pledge of the presence of God with you, be not greatly moved, nor troubled by any difficulties that you may meet withal; be not moved with any terror, but sanctify the Lord of hosts in your hearts, and make him your dread, and your fear, and he shall be a refuge, and a hiding place unto you.

Some pretend to visions of God, and they prophesy your ruin, and destruction; yea, they have limited times thereof, to the shame of their prognostications. Some are full of revenge, and they threaten your ruin, and talk what a catholick interest is complicating, and rising up against you. Some are troubled at your proceedings, that they are not in such equal paths as might be desired; as though that were a work, and way of yesterday; as though we had not been turned, and driven out of old tracks, and paths, above ten years ago; and as though the old paths were not so worn to the interest of a profane multitude, that it is yet impossible to keep the burden upright in them, whose guidance you are intrusted with. Some say you will never be able to go through with the charge of your undertakings. As though God had never said, *The gold and silver is mine*. Should these things busy or distract you? Doth the issue of the business in hand depend on the thoughts of these men? Will the end be according to their contrivances? Have these things indeed any influence at all into the determination of this controversy? Will not this one consideration guide your hearts and spirits, when all these waves roll all together upon you? Yea, but the whole of this affair must be ordered, and will fall out, according as the presence of God is with us, or otherwise. *If God be with us, who shall be against us?* How may you on this account triumph against all oppositions whatsoever?

*Use 4.* Fix then your thoughts on the things which lie in a tendency towards the confirming of God's special providential presence with you. You have heard of the tenure of it, the means whereby it is procured, and retained: these things I have spoken to in general before. Besides your own dependance on God, and comportment with his providence, the things incumbent on you are such, as respect either persons, or things.

(1.) For persons, it is that which I have minded you of before, and which I shall do whilst I have life and opportunity to speak to you, or any concerned in the government of this nation, in publick or private; because I know it is your life, your peace, your duty: and that is, that the end and aim of all your consultations, be the protection, encouragement, liberty of the seed of *Jacob*, the remnant, the hidden people; those whom God hath owned, accepted, blessed, given his presence unto, and amongst them. I plead not for their exaltation, promotion, preferment, I know not what; but charge it as your duty to take care, that this be not trodden under foot, nor swallowed up, nor exposed to the rage and contempt of the men of the earth; it is not this, or that party of them that I speak of, but the generation of them that seek the face of God, whose cause alone it is, and not of any other men, or frame of things, that is through the mighty power of God triumphant in these nations. They are to God as the apple of his eye, and let their safety be so also to you, and you will not fail of the presence of God.



(2.) For things, they are either, [1.] The things of God; or, [2.] Men: of each a word.

[1.] For the things of God, or the publick profession of religion in the land, my time is too far spent for me to enter into a serious discourse on the subject. Some things have of late been done, which when envy, and anger, and disappointment shall cease to operate, the whole people of God in this nation will have cause to rejoice in.

Let it not be thought amiss, if I mind you of one part of the nation in especial, the example of the saints allow us a special regard to those of our own nation, our kinsfolks in the flesh. It is for *Wales* I speak, where the unhappiness of almost all men running into extremes, hath disadvantaged the advancement of the Gospel, and the progress of it, when we had great ground for the expectation of better things. Some are still zealous of the traditions of their fathers, and nothing almost will satisfy them, but their old road of beggarly readers in every parish. Others again, perhaps out of a good zeal, have hurried the people with violence beyond their principles, and sometimes it may be beyond the truth; and as *Jacob* said, Over-driving the cattle, and young ones, have almost destroyed the whole flock. Between complaints on one side, and the other, I fear between misguided zeal, and formality, the whole work is almost cast to the ground, the business of *Zion*, as such, is scarce by any cared for. The good Lord guide you to somewhat for its relief, that those who are godly may be encouraged, and those that need instruction may not be neglected.

[2.] The things of man, or righteous administrations of justice in things relating to this present pilgrimage. These wheels also are you to set going. Many particulars lie before you, more will present themselves, troublesome times have always produced good laws; your wisdom will be to provide for good execution, that not only the generations to come, but the present, may eat of the fruit of your labours and travel.

## \* S E R M O N XLII.

The Glory and Interest of Nations professing the Gospel.

To the Right Honourable the Commons of *England* Assembled in Parliament.



Need not give any other account of my publishing this ensuing short discourse, than that which was also the ground and reason of its preaching, namely, your command. Those who are not satisfied therewith, I shall not endeavour to tender farther grounds of satisfaction unto, as not having any persuasion of prevailing if I should attempt

\* This Sermon was preach'd, at a private Fast, to the Commons assembled in Parliament.



it. Prejudice so far oftentimes prevails even on good soils, that satisfaction will not speedily thrive and grow in them. That which exempts me from solicitousness about the frame and temper of mens minds and spirits, in the entertainment of discourses of this nature, is the annexing of that injunction unto our commission in delivering the word of God: it must be done, *whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear*. Without therefore any plea, or apology, for whatever may seem most to need it in this sermon, I devolve the whole account of the rise and issue it had, or may have, on the providence of God in my call, and your command. Only I shall crave leave to add, that in my waiting for a little leisure to recollect what I deliver'd out of my own short notes and others (that I might not preach one sermon, and print another) there were some considerations that fell in exciting me to the obedience I had purposed. The desire I had to make more publick, at this time and season, the testimony given in simplicity of spirit to the interest of Christ in these nations, and therein to the true, real interest of these nations themselves, which was my naked design openly manag'd and pursu'd with all plainness of speech (as the small portion of time allotted to this exercise would allow) was the chief of them. Solicitations of some particular friends gave also warmth unto that consideration. I must farther confess, that I was a little moved by some mistakes, that were deliver'd into the hands of report, to be manag'd to the discountenance of the honest and plain truth contended for, especially when I found them without due consideration expos'd in print unto publick view. That is the manner of these days wherein we live. I know full well, that there is not any thing from the beginning to the ending of this short discourse, that doth really interfere with any form of civil government in the world, administred according to righteousness and equity; as there is not in the Gospel of Christ, or in any of the concernments of it. And I am assur'd also that the truth propos'd in it, enwraps the whole ground of any just expectation of the continuance of the presence of God amongst us, and his acceptation of our endeavours about the allotment and just disposal of our civil affairs. Let others lay what weight they will or please, upon the lesser differences that are amongst us on any account whatever; if this shield be safe, this principle maintain'd and establish'd that is here laid down, and the just rights of the nation laid in a way of administration suited unto its preservation and furtherance, I shall not easily be cast down from my hopes, that amongst us poor, unprofitable, unthankful creatures as we are, we may yet see the fruit of righteousness to be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for evermore. For those then who shall cast their eye on this paper, I would beg of them to lay aside all those prejudices against persons or things, which their various contexture in our publick affairs may possibly have rais'd in them. I know how vain, for the most part, expectations of pre-  
vailing



vailing in such a desire, by naked requests are. But sick men must be groaning, though they look for no relief thereby. Wherefore committing it into that hand, wherein lie also your hearts and mine, I shall commend it for your use unto the sovereign grace of him, who is able to work all your present works for you, and which is more, to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. So prays,

*Your servant in the work*

*of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*and his Gospel,*

JOHN OWEN.

ISAIAH iv. 5.

*---Upon all the glory shall be a defence.*



THE design of this *chapter* is to give in relief against outward perplexing extremities from Gospel promises, and the presence of Christ with his people in those extremities. The next intendment of the words in the type, seems to relate to the deliverance of the people of the *Jews* from the *Babylonish* captivity, and the presence of God amongst them upon their return; God frequently taking occasion from thence, to mind them of the covenant of grace, with the full ratification and publication of it by Christ, as is evident from *Jer.* xxxi, and xxxii. and sundry other places.

As to our purpose, we have considerable in the *chapter*: The persons to whom these promises are given: the condition wherein they were: and the promises themselves that are made to them for their supportment and consolation.

*First*, The persons intended are the remnant, the *escaping*, the *evasion* of *Israel*, as the word signifies, *ver.* 2. they that are *left*, that *remain*, *ver.* 3. who escape the great desolation that was to come on the body of the people, the furnace they were to pass through. Only in the close of that *verse*, they have a farther description added of them, from the purpose of God concerning their grace and glory; they are written among the living, or rather written unto life; every one that is written, that is, designed unto life in *Jerusalem*.

As to the persons in themselves considered, the application is easy unto this assembly: are you not the remnant, the *escaping* of *England*? Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Are you not they that are left, they that remain, from great trials and desolations? The Lord grant that the application may hold out, and abide to the end of the prophecy.

*Secondly*, The condition that this remnant, or *escaping* had been in, is laid down in some figurative expressions concerning the smallness of this remnant, or the paucity of them that should escape, and the greatness of the extremities they should be exercised withal. I cannot insist on particulars; it may suffice that great distresses and calamities are intimated therein; and such have the days of our former trials and troubles been to some of us.



*Thirdly,* The promises here made to this people, thus escaped from great distresses, are of two sorts. Original, or fundamental : and then consequential thereon.

1. There is the great spring, or fountain promise, from which all others, as lesser streams do flow ; and that is the promise of Christ himself unto them, and amongst them ; *ver. 2.* He is that branch of *Jehovah*, and that fruit of the earth, which is there promised. He is the bottom and foundation, the spring and fountain of all the good that is or shall be communicated unto us, all other promises are but rivulets from that unsearchable ocean of Grace and love, that is in the promise of Christ ; of which afterwards.

2. The promises that are derived and flow from hence, may be referred unto three heads. (1.) Of beauty and glory, *ver. 2.* (2.) Of holiness and purity, *ver. 3, 4.* (3.) Of preservation and safety, *ver. 5, 6.*

My text lies among the last sort, and not intending long to detain you, I shall pass over the other, and immediately close with that of our present concernment.

Now this promise of *ver. 5.* is of a comprehensive nature, and relates to spiritual and temporal safety or preservation. Godliness, though it be not much believed, yet indeed hath the promises of this life, and that which is to come.

I shall a little open the words of the *verse*, and thereby give light to those which I have chosen peculiarly to insist upon. It is, as I have said, safety and preservation, both spiritual and temporal, that is here engaged for ; and concerning it we have considerable.

[1.] The manner of its production ; I will create it, saith God. There is a creating power, needful to be exerted, for the preservation of *Sion's* remnant. Their preservation must be of God's creation. It is not only not to be educed out of any other principle, or to be wrought by any other means ; but it must, as it were by the almighty power of God, be brought out of nothing ; God must create it. At least, as there were two sorts of God's creatures at the beginning, that dark body of matter, whose rise was merely from nothing ; and those things which from that dark confused heap he made to be other things, than what they were therein ; it is of the last sort of creatures, if not of the first. If the preservation of this remnant be not out of nothing, without any means at all ; yet it is for the most part from that darkness and confusion of things, which contributes very little or nothing towards it ; I will create it, saith God ; and whilst he continues possessed of his creating power, it shall be well with his *Israel*.

[2.] For the nature of it, it is here set out under the terms of that eminent pledge of the presence of God with the people in the wilderness, for their guidance and protection in the midst of all their difficulties and hazards, by a pillar of cloud, and a flaming fire ; this guided them through the sea, and continued with them after the setting up of the tabernacle in the wilderness forty years. The use and efficacy of that pillar, the intendment of God in it, the advantage of the people by it, I cannot stay to unfold : it may suffice in general, that it was a great and signal pledge of God's presence with them for their guidance and preservation ; that they might act according to his will, and enjoy safety in so doing. Only whereas this promise here respects Gospel times, the nature of the mercy promised is enlarged, and thereby somewhat changed. In the wilderness there was but one tabernacle, and so consequently one cloud by day, and one pillar of fire by night ; was a sufficient pledge of the presence of God with the whole people : there are now many dwelling places ; many assemblies of mount *Sion* ; and in the enlargement of mercy and grace under the Gospel, the same pledge of God's presence and favour is promised to every one of them, as was before to the whole. The word we have translated *a dwelling place*, denotes not a *common habitation*, but a *place prepared* for God ; and is the same with the assemblies and congregations in the expression following. The sum of all is, God, by his creating power, in despite of all opposition, will bring forth preservation for his people, guiding them in paths wherein they shall find peace and safety. Only ye may observe the order and dependance of these promises ; the promise of holiness, *ver. 4.* lies in order, before that of safety, *ver. 5.* Unless our filth and our blood be purged away, by a spirit of judgment, and a spirit of burning, it's in vain for us to look for the pillar and the cloud. If we are not interested in holiness, we shall not be interested in safety ; I mean, as it lies in the promise, and is a mercy washed in the blood of *Jesus* ; for as for the peace of the world, I regard it not.



Let not men of polluted hearts, and defiled hands, once imagine that God cares for them in an especial manner. If our filth and our blood, our sin and our corruption abide upon us, and we are delivered, it will be for a greater ruin; the way unto the cloud and pillar, is by the spirit of judgment and burning.

The words of my text are a recapitulation of the whole *verse*; and are a Gospel promise given out in law terms; or a New Testament mercy, under Old Testament expressions.

I shall then briefly shew you these two things: 1.) What is here expressed, as to the type and figure: 2.) What is here intended, as to the substance of the mercy promised.

1.) For the figure; by the glory and defence, a double consort, or two pairs of things seem to be intended: The ark, and the mercy seat; the tabernacle, and the pillar of fire.

(1. For the first; the ark is oftentimes called the glory of God, *Psal. lxxviii. 61. He gave his strength into captivity, and his glory into the hand of his enemies.* Where he speaks of the surprisal of the ark by the *Philistines*; which when it was accomplished, *Phineas's* wife called her son *Ichabod*, and said, the glory is departed, *1 Sam. iv. 21.* The word which we have rendered a defence, properly signifies a covering; as was the mercy seat, the covering of the ark. So that upon the glory shall be a defence, is as much as unto you, the mercy seat shall be on the ark, or you shall have the mercy represented and intimated thereby.

(2. The tabernacle and cloud, or pillar of fire, are also called to mind; so the words are expressive of that figure of God's gracious presence with his people, which we have recounted, *Exod. xl. 34. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.* So it continued, the glory of God was in the tabernacle, and the cloud upon it, or over it; as the word here is; and so upon all the glory there was a defence.

2.) I need not stay to prove that all those things were typical of Christ. He was the end of the law, represented by the ark, which did contain it, *Rom. x. 3, 4.* He was the mercy seat, as he is called, and said to be, *Rom. iii. 25.* *1 John ii. 2.* Covering the law from the eye of justice, as to those that are interested in him. He was the tabernacle and temple wherein dwelt the glory of God, and which was recompensed with all pledges of his gracious presence.

Apply then this promise to Gospel times, and the substance of it is comprehended in these two *Propositions*.

I. The presence of Christ with any people, is the glory of any people.

This is the glory here spoken of, as is evident to any one that will but read over the second *verse*, and consider its influence into these words. *The branch of the Lord shall be to them beautiful and glorious, and upon all the glory shall be a defence.*

II. The presence of God in special providence over a people, attends the presence of Christ in grace with a people.

If Christ the glory be with them, a defence shall be upon them; what lies else in allusion to the mercy seat, not drawn forth in these propositions, may be afterwards insisted on.

I. For the first: What I pray else should be so? This is their glory, or they have none; is it in their number, that they are great, many, and populous. God thinks not so, nor did he when he gave an account of the thoughts of his people of old. *The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor chuse you, because you were more in number than any people, for you were the fewest of all people, Deut. vii. 7.* God made no reckoning of numbers; he chose that people that was fewest of all: he esteemed well of them, when they were but a few men in number, *you, very few, and strangers, Psal. cv. 12.* You know what it cost *David* in being seduced by *Satan* into the contrary opinion. He thought the glory of his people had been in their number, and caused them to be reckoned; but God taught him his error, by taking off with a dreadful judgment no small portion of the number he sought after. There is nothing more common in the Scripture, than for the Lord to speak contempt of the multitude of any people, as a thing of nought; and he takes pleasure to confound them by weak and despised means. Is it in their wisdom and counsel, their understanding for the ordering of their affairs? Is that their glory? Why, see

how



how God derides the prince of *Tyrus*, who was lifted up with an apprehension hereof; and counted himself as God, upon that account; *Ezek. xxvii. 3, 4, 5, 6. &c.* The issue of all is; *Thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slays thee*, God will let him see in his ruin and destruction, what a vain thing that was, which he thought his glory. Might I dwell upon it I could evince unto you these two things:

1. That whereas the end of all humane wisdom in nations, or the rulers of them, is, to preserve humane society in peace and quietness, within the several bounds and allotments that are given unto them by the providence of God, it so comes to pass for the most part through the righteous judgment, and wise disposal of God, that it hath a contrary end, and bringeth forth contrary effects throughout the world. Do not the inhabitants of the earth generally owe all their disturbance, sorrow, and blood to the wise contrivance of a few men, not knowing how to take the law of their proceedings from the mouth of God, but laying their deep counsels, and politrick contrivances, in a subserviency to their lusts and ambition? And what glory is there in that which almost constantly brings forth contrary effects to its own proper end and intendment?

2. That God delights to mix a spirit of giddiness, error, and folly in the counsels of the wise men of the world; making them reel and stagger in their way like a drunken man, that they shall not know what to do, but commonly in their greatest concerns, fix upon things as devoid of true reason, and sound wisdom, as any children or fools could close withal. *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong*, Job v. 13, 14. so at large, *Isa. xix. 11, 12, 13, 14.* and now where is their glory? I could give instances of both these, and that plentifully in the days and seasons that have passed over our own heads. The like also may be said of the strength, the power, the armies of any people; if their number and wisdom be vain, be no glory, their strength which is but the result or exurgency of their number and wisdom, must needs be so also. But you have all this summed up together, *Jer. ix. 23, 24. Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord: It is neither wisdom, nor might, nor riches, that is our glory; but our interest in Jehovah only.*

This I say is in the presence of Christ only.

Now Christ may be said to be present with a people two ways.

(1.) In respect of the dispensation of his Gospel amongst them, the profession of it, and subjection to the ordinances thereof. The Gospel of Christ is a blessed Gospel, a glorious Gospel, in itself, and unto them that embrace it. But yet this profession separated from the root from which it ought to spring, is not the glory of any people; Christ is not their glory, who are his shame. Empty profession is the shame of Christ in the world; and shall not be others glory. The Apostle tells us that this may consist with a litter of unclean lusts, making them in whom it is abominable to God and man, *2 Tim. iii. 4, &c.* If the bare profession of the truth would render a nation glorious, Oh, how glorious were this nation! So would have been the people of old, who cried, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.* But when men profess the truth of Christ, but in their hearts and ways maintain and manifest an enmity to the power of that truth, and to all of Christ that is in reality in the world, this is no glory.

(2.) Christ is present with a people in and by his spirit, dwelling in their hearts by his spirit and faith, uniting them to himself: I do not distinguish this from the former as inconsistent with it; for though the former may be without this, yet where this is, there will be the former also. Profession may be without union, but union will bring forth profession. There may be a form of godliness without power: but where the power is, there will be the appearance also. Now when Christ is thus present with a people, that is, they are united to him by his spirit, they are members of his mystical body, that is, their glory. Be they few or many in a nation that are so, they are the glory of that nation, and nothing else; and where there is the most of them, there is the most glory; and where they are diminished, there the glory is eclipsed. Christ mystical, the head, and his body is all the glory that is in the world. If any nation be glorious and honourable above others, it is because of this presence



presence of Christ in that nation. Christ is the glory of his saints, *Isa. iv. 2.* In him they glory, *Isa. xlv. 25.* And the *saints are Christ's glory*, *2 Cor. viii. 23.* They are the glory of Christ, and he glories in them, as God of *Job*, to *Satan*: *See'st thou my servant Job? chap. i. 8.* He doth as it were glory in him against the wickedness of the world; and Christ in them, and they in him, are all the glory of this world. So *Zech. ii. 8.* Christ was in the pursuit of the collection of his people from their dispersion: what seeks he after; what looks he for? he goes after the glory; even to find out them who are God's glory in the world.

Now this is the glory of any people upon a threefold account.

[1.] This alone makes them honourable and precious before God. So says God of them, *Isa. xliii. 1.* *I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine*; those are they of whom I spake: what then? *ver. 4.* *Thou art precious in my sight, thou art honourable, I have loved thee*; how doth God manifest his valuation of them? *ver. 3.* Why he will give all the world, the greatest, mightiest, wealthiest nations for them, *ver. 5.* all is as nothing in comparison of them, who are his portion, and the lot of his inheritance. The Lord keep this alive upon your hearts, that that may be in your eyes the glory of this nation, on the account whereof, it is precious to God, and honourable in his sight.

[2.] Because this presence of Christ makes men comely and excellent in themselves, with what eye soever the world may look upon them. The whole world out of Christ lies in evil, under the curse of God, and defilement of sin: in all the glittering shews of their wealth and riches, in the state and magnificence of their governments, the beauty of their laws and order (as they relate to their persons) they are in the eye of God a filthy and an abominable thing, a thing that his soul loatheth. Curse and sin will make any thing to be so: but now Christ is to them and in them beautiful and glorious, *Isa. iv. 2.* Christ is so in himself, and he is so unto them, and makes them to be so. There is through him beauty, and excellency, and comeliness, every thing that may make them lovely and acceptable. That the world looks not on them as such, is not their fault, but the world's misery: it looked on their master Christ himself, the brightness of his Father's glory, who is altogether lovely, the chiefest of ten thousand, with no other eye, *Isa. liii. 2.* They are so in themselves, and are so to Christ; being exposed indeed to many temptations, oftentimes they are made black and sully by them: but yet they are comely still, *Cant. i. 5.* The ways whereby they are made black, for the most part we have expressed, *ver. 6.* when the sun shines on them, and they are made keepers of the vineyard, it comes upon them. Prosperity, and publick employment oftentimes so sully them, that they are made black to the reproach of the world: but yet to Christ who forgives, and washes them, they are comely. Yea, this is all the excellency that is in the world. Sin with honour, with wealth, with power, with wisdom, is a deformed and contemptible thing: it is grace only that is beautiful and glorious: it is the gracious only that are excellent in the earth, *Psal. xvi. 3.*

[3.] This alone makes any truly useful unto others; and that either for preservation, or prosperity.

1.) Here lies the preservation of any nation from ruin. *Isa. lxxv. 8, 9.* *Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants sake, that I may not destroy them all.* This is the blessing in the cluster, the hidden and secret blessing, for the sake whereof, the whole is not destroyed. The remnant left by the Lord of hosts, *Isa. i. 9.* that keeps the whole from being as *Sodom* or *Gomorrhah*. If *Elisha*, a servant of the Lord, told the King of *Israel* in his distress, that if he had not regarded the presence of *Jehoshaphat*, the King of *Judah*, he would not so much as have spoken to him; how much more will the Lord himself let a people know in their distress, that were it not for the regard he hath to his secret ones, he would not take the least notice, as to relief, of them or their concernments. *Sodom* could not be destroyed until *Lot* was deliver'd. The whole world owes its preservation and being to them, whom they make it their business to root out of it: they are as the foolish woman, that pulls down her own house with both her hands. It is not your counsels, you know how they have been divided, intangled, ensnared, it is not your armies, as such; what have they been to oppose against the mighty floods that have risen up in this nation; and they also have been as a reed driven to and fro



fro, with the wind (mankind is no better; *John the Baptist* saies it of himself) but it is this presence of Christ in and with his, that hath been the preservation of *England*, in the midst of all the changes and revolutions that we have been exercised withal, *Mich. v. 5.*

2.) Not only preservation, but prosperity is from hence also, *Mich. v. 7. And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, that waits not for the sons of men.* It is the remnant of *Jacob*, of whom he speaks, that is, this people of Christ, with whom he is so present as hath been manifested; and where are they? They are in the midst of many people, in their inside, in their bowels; they are woven by their relations and employments into the bowels of the nations; and on that account there is neither this nor any nation about us, but shall spin out their mercies or their misery from their own bowels; their providential fates lie in them; as is their deportment towards this remnant, such will their issue be. But what shall this remnant do? Why it shall be *as dew from the Lord*, and as *showers on the grass.* It shall be that alone which makes them fruitful, flourishing and prosperous; it may be it will be so, provided there be good assistance, counsel and strength, to carry on their affairs: yea blessed be God for counsels and for armies, he hath made them useful to us: but the truth is, the blessing of this dew depends not on them, it tarrieth not for man, it waiteth not for the sons of men: it will be a blessing, let men do what they will; it depends not on their uncertain and unstable counsel, on their weak and feeble strength. This remnant is as the ark in the house of *Obed Edom*, as *Joseph* in the house of *Potiphar*, all is blessed and prospered for their sakes. It is not the glorious battlements, the painted windows, the crouching anticks that support a building, but the stones that lie unseen in, or upon the earth. It is often those who are despised and trampled on, that bear up the weight of an whole nation. All the fresh springs of our blessings are in *Sion.*

It were easy to manifest that in all our late revolutions we have turned on this hinge. According as the presence of Christ with his people, in the power of his spirit, hath received entertainment in these nations, so hath our state and condition been. For many years before the beginning of these troubles the land had been full of oppression, I mean, in respect to the people of God. Poverty, imprisonment, dangers, banishment, reproaches were their portion. God was long patient; at length the height of their adversaries came to this, that they set not themselves so much against their persons or ways, as against the spirit of Christ in and with them: that was made their reproach, that the byword wherewith they were despised in the mouths of their adversaries, and the profane multitude: when things were come to this, that the very presence of Christ with his people, was made the direct object of the hatred of men, the Lord could bear it no longer; but swore by himself, that time should be given them no more: in this very house he raised up saviours and deliverers on mount *Sion* to judge the mount of *Edom*; and how did he carry on this work? Not by might, nor by power, but *by the spirit of the Lord of hosts*, as *Zec. iv. 6.* Even by that very spirit which had been reviled and despised. Give me leave to say, the work of judging this nation was carried on by the presence of the spirit of Christ with his in faith and prayer: it was not by prudence of counsels, or strength of armies above that of our enemies, that we prevailed, but by faith and prayer; and if any one be otherwise minded, I leave him for his resolution to the judgment of the great day, when all transactions shall be called over again. The adversaries themselves I am sure acknowledged it, when they openly professed, that there was nothing left for them to overcome, or to overcome them, but the prayers of the fanatick crew.

After some years contending, when the Lord had begun to give us deliverance by breaking the power of the enemy, at least in this nation, besides those bitter divisions that fell out among the people of God themselves, and the backsliding of some, to the cause and principles they had opposed, this evil was also found rising again amongst us; slighting, blaspheming, contemning under several pretences, of the spirit and presence of Christ in and with his saints: you know what ensued; what shakings, what revolutions, with new wars, bloodshed, and desolation,



over the three nations. And give me leave to remember you as one that had opportunity to make observations of the passages of providence in those days, in all the three nations, in the times of our greatest hazards; give me leave, I say, to remember you, that the publick declarations of those employed in the affairs of this nation, in the face of the enemies, their addresses unto God among themselves, their prayers night and day, their private discourses one with another, were, that the preservation of the interest of Christ in and with his people was the great thing that lay in their eyes; and that if it were not so, they desired that God would stop them in their way, yea rather cause their carcases to fall in the high places of the field, than to prosper them in that which should be contrary thereunto: and we know what ensued. How we have used our mercies is another matter: this was the principle that prevailed with God and man.

*Use 1.* If you desire the glory of these nations, labour to promote the interest of Christ in these nations. I am not speaking unto you about disputable things, differences among the people of God themselves, nor am I interposing my advice in your civil affairs, but I speak in general about those with whom Christ is present, by his spirit, his chosen ones, against whom there is an old enmity in Satan and the world. The glory of these nations is, that there is a people in them, that have Christ in the midst of them; let it be your business to take care for that glory. But how shall we do it?

(1.) Labour personally, every one of you to get Christ in your own hearts. I am very far from thinking that a man may not be lawfully called to magistracy, if he be not a believer; or that being called, he should be impeded in the execution of his trust, and place, because he is not so; I shall not suspend my obedience whilst I enquire after my lawful governor's conversion; but yet this I say, considering that I cannot much value any good, but what comes in by the way of promise, I confess I can have no great expectation from them whom God loves not, delights not in; if any be otherwise minded, I shall not contend with him; but for this I will contend with all the world, that it is your duty to labour to assure Christ in your own hearts, even that you may be the better fitted for the work of God in the world. It is the promise of God to *Sion*, that her officers shall be peace, and her exaltors righteousness, *Isai. lx. 17.* and then shall she call her walls salvation, and her gates praise, *v. 18.* It will be little advantage to any, to have the work of God raised in the world, and not to have the foundation stone laid in their hearts. If there should be in any of you an enmity unto Christ, and the power of godliness, an hatred and contempt of the people of God, an evil heart of unbelief, an evil course of life, worldliness, oppression, vanity of mind, &c. would it advantage you to be entrusted with power in these nations? Would it not hasten your destruction, and increase your account? It is a noble promise that we have, *Isai. xxxii. 17.* *And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.* It is a Gospel righteousness that is spoken of; and that not of the cause as such only, but of the persons; the persons being righteous, and that with the righteousness of Christ, the effects mentioned, shall follow their righteous undertakings; we have peace now, outward peace; but alas, we have not quietness, and if any thing may be done that may give us quietness, yet perhaps we may not have assurance; we may be quickly shaken again; but when the righteousness of the persons, and cause meet, all the rest will follow.

(2.) Set your selves to oppose that overflowing flood of profaneness, and opposition to the power of godliness, that is spreading it self over this nation. Know you not that the nation begins to be overwhelmed by the pourings out of a profane, wicked, carnal spirit, full of rage and contempt of all the work of reformation that been attempted amongst us? Do you not know that if the former profane principle should prove predominant in this nation, that it will quickly return to its former station and condition, and that with the price of your dearest blood? And yet is there not already such a visible prevalency of it, that in many places, the very profession of religion is become a scorn; and in others, those old forms and ways taken up with greediness, which are a badge of apostacy from all former engagements, and actions? And are not these sad evidences of the Lord's departing from us? If I should lay before you a comparison between the degrees of the



the appearances of the glory of God in this nation, the steps whereby it came forth, and those whereby it seems almost to be departing, it would be a matter of admiration and lamentation; I pray God we lose not our ground faster than we won it. Were our hearts kept up to our good old principles on which we first engaged, it would not be so with us; but innumerable evils have laid hold upon us; and the temptations of these days have made us a woful prey; grey hairs are here and there, and it will be no wonder if our ruin should come with more speed, than did our deliverance. O then set your selves in the gap; by all ways and means oppose the growth of an evil, profane, common, malignant spirit amongst us. But I haste,

(3.) Value, encourage and close with them, in and with whom is this presence of Christ. They are the glory of the nation; it's peace, safety and prosperity will be found wrapped up in them. I know there lye divers considerable objections against the practice of this duty; I shall name some few of them, and leave the exhortation unto your considerations.

[1.] Who are those persons in whom is this presence of Christ? Are they such as profess indeed religion, but neglect all rules of righteousness; that would be accounted godly, but care not to be honest? The marks of whose miscarriages are written on their foreheads; are not these so far from being the glory, that they are the shame of any nation? I pray give me leave to endeavour the rolling away of this great stone of offence, in these few ensuing considerations.

1.) Then I shall willingly lay this down for a principle, That he is not religious, who is not also righteous; as also I shall not much value his righteousness, who is not religious. He that is righteous doth righteousness; he doth so, in the bent of his spirit and course of his ways and walkings. If a man be froward, heady, highminded, sensual, unjust, oppressive, worldly, self seeking, a hater of good men, false, treacherous, let him pretend to what he will, that man's religion is in vain; he may have a form of godliness, but he hath not the power of it. This principle we shall agree upon.

2.) There have been in the days wherein we live, many false professors, hypocrites, that have thought gain to be godliness, by reason of whose wicked lives, ways and walking, the name of God hath been evil spoken of; and woe to them by whom these offences are come; but yet also woe to the world because of offences; if these offences turn off men from an esteem of the remnant of Christ in whom is his presence, woe to them also. I acknowledge these days have abounded with offences; but woe to them who are turned aside by them from owning the portion and inheritance of Christ.

3.) It cannot be denied, but that many of them who do belong unto Christ, have wofully miscarried in these days. O tell it not in *Gath*, publish it not in *Askelon*; oh that our souls could mourn in secret on that account, that we could go backward, and cover the nakedness and folly of one another; but alas, this hath been far from being our frame of spirit; we have every one spread the failings of his brother, before the face of men and devils; but yet notwithstanding these miscarriages, those that are the people of Christ, are his people still; and he loves them still, whether we will or no; and commonly those who are least able to bear with the miscarriages of others, have most of their own.

4.) That differences of judgments in civil affairs, or Church matters ought not presently to be made arguments of men; not being righteous. Some men think that none are righteous that are not of their principles, than which principle there is nothing more unrighteous. Let men that differ from them walk never so holily, profess never so strictly; yet if they are not of their mind, they are not righteous. If men are offended on such accounts, it is because they will be so.

5.) This hath ever been the way of the men of the world; that when any have been unblameable and zealous upon the account of religion, they will attempt their reputation, though without any ground or colour, upon the account of righteousness. So suffered the Christians of old; and so the puritans of former days, unjustly and falsely, as God will judge and declare. The world then in this matter is not to be believed; the common reports of it are from the Devil, the accuser of the brethren; who accuses them in the same manner before God night and day. These are but pretences, whereby men ignorant of the mystery of the Gospel, and the power of grace, harden themselves to their ruin.



6.) This remnant of Christ with whom his presence is, who are the glory of a nation, is to be found only amongst the professors of a nation. For,

[1.] Although, of those who are professors, there may be many bad, yet of those that are not professors, there is not one good. Where, there is faith there will be a profession. If I should not know well where to find them; I am sure I know where I cannot find them, I cannot find them in the ways of the world, and conformity to it; in darkness, ignorance, neglect of duty, and utter unacquaintedness with Gospel truths, the gifts and graces of the spirit; there I cannot find them; I shall not say of them, *Behold the Lord's anointed*, let their outward worldly appearance be what it will. Now by the help of these considerations, those who have in themselves principles of life and light in Christ, will or may be, setting aside their temptations, enabled to discover this generation of the Lord's delight; and for others, I cannot take down the enmity that God hath set up. So then notwithstanding this objection, I shall certainly esteem this remnant of Christ to lie among those, who having received Gospel light, and Gospel gifts evidently, do make also profession of Gospel grace, union and communion with Christ, separation from the world, and the ways of it, in a conversation acceptable unto God in Christ; and to this portion shall I say as *Ruth to Naomi*: let what will be glorious, or uppermost in the world, *Whether thou goest I will go, where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; the Lord do so to me and more also, if ought part thee and me*; with them let my portion be, and the portion of my family, whatever their lot and condition in this world should be; and the Lord say *Amen*.

[2.] But it will be said secondly, we are still at a loss; for what woful divisions are there amongst this generation of professors? Some are for one way, and some for another; some say one sort are the people of God, some another; some say the prelatists are so, some the presbyterians, some the independents, some the anabaptists, some the fifth monarchy men, some others, and on whom should the valuation pleaded for be cast?

To this I answer,

1.) Some do say so, and plead thus, it cannot be denied; but the truth is, the greater is their weakness and folly. It is impossible men acquainted with the spirit of Christ and the Gospel, should say so, unless they were under the power of one temptation or other. But it is no party, but the party of Christ in the world, and against the world, the seed of the woman, against the seed of the serpent that I am pleading for; that men as to their interest in Christ should be judged from such denominations, as though they make a great noise in the world, yet indeed signify very little things in themselves, is most unrighteous, and unequal; nor will men find peace in such rash and precipitate judgments.

2.) There may be many divisions amongst the people of God, and yet none of them be divided from Christ the head. The branches of a tree may be entangled by strong winds, and stricken against one another, and yet none of them be broken off from the tree its self; and when the storm is over every one possesses its own place in quietness, beauty and fruitfulness. Whilst the strong winds of temptations are upon the followers of Christ, they may be tossed and entangled; but not being broken off from the root, when he shall say to the winds, *Peace, be still*, they will flourish again in peace and beauty.

3.) Let not Satan cheat you of your duty, by this trivial objection. If he can keep you from duty, whilst he can make divisions; he hath you sure enough. They of whom I speak, be they under what reproach or obloquies soever, they are all true men, all the children of one father, though they are unhappily fallen out by the way.

Use. 2. Of encouragement to those that have the presence of Christ with them in the manner declared; they shall be safe; in vain it is for all the world to attempt their security; either they shall not prevail, or they shall mischief themselves by their own prevalency, *Mich. v. 8*. As they shall be a dew where they are appointed for a blessing, so as a lion, where they are oppressed. Destruction will come forth on their account, and that terribly like the destruction of a lion, speedily in passing through it shall be done. And whence is it that this feeble generation shall be as a lion? It is from the presence of Christ among them, who is the lion



of the tribe of *Judah*, and to honour them, he assigns that to them, which is his own proper work; let men take heed how they provoke this lion: for the present (*Gen. xlix. 9.*) he is *gone up from the prey*, he stoopeth down, he coucheth as a lion, and as an old lion, who shall rouse him up? He hath taken his prey in these nations, in the destruction of many of his enemies: he seemeth now to take his rest, to couch down, his indignation being overpast, but who shall rouse him up? Why what if he be provoked? what if he be stirred up? why he will not lie down, *until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain*, Num. xxiii. 24. There is no delivery, from him: No, but what if there be a strong combination of many against him, will he not cease and give over? *Isa. xxxi. 4.* Be they who they will, the shepherds of the people, be they never so many, a multitude of them, let them lift up their voice and rage never so much, all is one, he will perform his work and accomplish it: until you have him in the condition mentioned, *Isa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.* Blessed are the people that are under his care and conduct, yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.

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* S E R M O N XLIII.

How we may bring our Hearts to bear Reproofs.

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PSAL. cxli. 5.

*Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.*



T is generally agreed by Expositors that this *Psalm*, as that foregoing, with two of those that follow, were composed by *David* in the time of his banishment, or flight from the court of *Saul*. The state wherein he describeth himself to have been, the matter of his pleas and prayers contain'd in them, with sundry express circumstances regarding that season and his condition therein, do manifest that to have been the time of their composition.

That the *Psalmist* was now in some distress whereof he was deeply sensible, is evident from that vehemency of his spirit, which he expresseth in the reiteration of his request, or supplication, *ver. 1.* And by his desire, *that his prayer might come before the Lord as incense, and the lifting up of his hands as the evening sacrifice*, *ver. 2.* The *Jewish* expositors guess not improbably, that in that allusion he had regard unto his present exclusion from the holy services of the tabernacle, which in other places he deeply complains of.

For the matter of his prayer in this beginning of the *Psalm* (for I shall not look beyond the text) it respecteth himself, and his deportment under his present condition, which he desireth may be harmless and holy, becoming himself and useful unto others. And whereas he was two ways liable to miscarry; first, by too high an exasperation of spirit against his oppressors and persecutors; and secondly, by a fraudulent and pusillanimous compliance with them in their wicked courses (which are the two ex-



tremes that men are apt sinfully to run into in such conditions) he prays earnestly to be delivered from them both. The first he hath respect unto, *ver. 3. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips*: namely, that he might not under those great provocations which were given him, break forth into an unseemly intemperance of speech against his unjust oppressors, which sometimes fierce and unreasonable cruelties will wrest from very sedate and moderate spirits. But it was the desire of this holy *Psalmist*, as in like cases it should be ours, that his heart might be always preserved in such a frame, under the conduct of the spirit of God, as not to be surprized into an expression of distempered passion, in any of his words, or sayings. The other he regards in his earnest supplication, to be deliver'd from it, *ver. 4. Incline not my heart unto any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties*. There are two parts of his request unto the purpose intended. *First*, That by the power of God's grace influencing his mind and soul, his heart might not be inclined unto any communion or society with his wicked adversaries in their wickedness. *Secondly*, That he might be preserved from a liking of, or a longing after those things, which are the baits and allurements, whereby men are apt to be drawn into societies and conspiracies with the workers of iniquity; *And let me not eat of their dainties*. See *Prov. i. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14*. For he here describeth the condition of men, prospering for a season in a course of wickedness: they first jointly give up themselves unto the practice of iniquity, and then together solace themselves in those satisfactions of their lusts, which their power and interest in the world do furnish them withal. These are the *dainties*, of which an impotent longing and desire do betray the minds of unstable persons unto a compliance with ways of sin and folly: for I look on these *dainties* to comprise whatever *the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life* can afford. All these *David* prays to be delivered from any inclination unto; especially when they are made the allurements of a course of sin. In the enjoyment of these dainties it is the common practice of wicked men to sooth up, approve of, and mutually encourage one another in the way and course wherein they are engaged. And this compleats that goodly felicity which in this world so many aspire unto, and whereof alone they are capable. The whole of it is but a society in perishing sensual enjoyments, without controul, and with mutual applauses from one another.

This the *Psalmist* had a special regard unto; who casting his eye towards another communion and society which he longed after, *ver. 5.* that in the first place presents itself unto him, which is most opposite unto those mutual applauses and rejoicings in one another, which is the salt and cement of all evil societies; namely, rebukes and reproofs for the least miscarriages that shall be observed. Now whereas the dainties which some enjoy in a course of prosperous wickedness, are that alone which seems to have any thing in it amongst them that is desirable; and on the other side rebukes and reproofs are those alone which seem to have any sharpness, or matter of uneasiness and dislike in the society of the godly, *David* balanceth that which seemeth to be sharpest in the one society, against that which seems to be sweetest in the other, and without respect unto other advantages, prefers the one above the other. Hence some read the beginning of the words, *Let the righteous rather smite me, with respect unto this comparison and balance*.

*Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer shall be in their calamity*. The view of our translation will evidence the words to be elliptical in the original, by the various supplements which we make to fill up the sense of them, and render them coherent. And this hath put some difficulty on the interpretation of the text, and caused some variety of apprehensions in sober and learned expositors.

It is not unto my present purpose to engage into a discussion of all the difficulties of the text, seeing I design to found no other doctrine thereon, than what all will acknowledge to be contained in the words and their coherence. I shall only therefore briefly open them, with respect unto our present purpose, and its concernment in them.

*צדיק יחלמי צדיק חסר*, *the righteous*, is any one opposed to the workers of iniquity *ver. 4.* any righteous person whatever, any one who is of the society and communion of the righteous ones: for all the world falls under this distribution, as it will



one day appear. *Let him smite me*: The word סָּוֶה is seldom used in the Scripture, but to signify a *severe stroke*, which shakes the subject smitten, and causeth it to tremble. See *Prov.* xxiii. 25. 1 *Sam.* xiv. 6. *Psal.* lxxiv. 6. And it is used for the stroke of the hammer on the anvil, in fashioning of the iron, *Isa.* xli. 7. Wherefore the word סָּוֶה following may be taken adverbially as a lenitive of that severity which this word importeth. *Let him smite me*, but *leniter, benigne, misericorditer, gently, kindly, friendly, mercifully*. And so some translations read the words: *Let the righteous smite me friendly, or kindly*. But there is no need to wrest the word to such an unusual sense; for the *Psalmist* intends to shew, that so he may be delivered from the society of ungodly men, and enjoy the communion of the righteous, he would not deprecate the greatest severities, which, according to rule, might be exercised in rebuking, or reproving of him. And this he doth with so full a satisfaction of mind, with such an high valuation of the advantage he should have thereby, that he says not he would bear it patiently and quietly, but סָּוֶה, it will be unto me a *benignity, a mercy, a kindness*, as the word imports. And as it seems that some reproofs at least, some regular dealings of righteous persons with us, may come as a stroke that makes us shake and tremble; so it is a good advance in spiritual wisdom, to find out kindness and mercy in those that are so grievous unto our natural spirits, unto flesh and blood.

וְיִכְחֵנִי, *And let him reprove me*. This manifests what he intends by smiting in the foregoing words. It is *reproofs* that he intends; and these he calls smiting in opposition unto the flattering compliance of wicked men with one another in the enjoyment of their *dainties*, and with respect unto that smart unto the mind and affections, wherewith some of them are sometimes accompanied. But this word directly expressing that subject matter whercof I intend to treat, must be again spoken unto.

שֶׁמֶן רֹאשׁ אֶל־יָנִי רֹאשִׁי: These words have a double interpretation; for they may be either deprecatory of an evil implied, or declaratory of the *Psalmist's* sense of the good he desired. *Kimchi* on the place observes, that his father *Joseph* divided the words of the text, and began here a new sense, wherein the *Psalmist* returns unto the close of the *fourth verse*: *Let me not eat of their dainties, and let not their precious oil*, that is, their flatteries and soothing in sin, *break my head*; but let the reproofs of the righteous preserve me. And this sense is followed by the *vulgar Latin*: *Oleum autem peccatorum non impingat caput meum*. But the other construction and sense of the words is more natural: שֶׁמֶן רֹאשׁ, *Oleum capitis*, the oil of the head, we render an *excellent oil*; and countenance may be given unto that interpretation from *Exod.* xxx. 23. where בְּשָׂמִים רֹאשׁ, *Spices of the head*, is well rendered, *principal spices*. But I rather think that שֶׁמֶן עֲלֵרֹאשׁ, *Oil poured on the head*, which was the manner of all solemn unctions, is intended. This being a great privilege, and the token of the communication of great mercy, the *Psalmist* compares the rebukes of the righteous thereunto; and therefore he adds, אֶל־יָנִי רֹאשִׁי, *it shall not break my head*. Considering reproofs in their own nature, he calls them *smittings*; some of them being very sharp, as it is needful they should be, where we are obliged to rebuke ἀποστέλλω, in a *piercing and cutting manner*, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 10. *Tit.* i. 13. But with respect unto their use, benefit, and advantage, they are like unto that anointing oil, which being poured on the head, was both gentle and pleasant, and a pledge of the communication of spiritual privileges, whence no inconveniences would ensue.

The last clause of the words belonging not unto our present design, I shall not insist on their explication.

Some few things must be farther premised unto our principal intention concerning the nature of those *reproofs*, which are proposed as a matter of such advantage in the text. And,

1. The word יָכַח here used, signifieth, *to argue, to dispute, to contend in judgment*, as well as *to reprove, rebuke, or reprehend*. Its first signification is *to argue, or to plead a cause with arguments*. Hence it is used as a common term between God and man, denoting the reasons real, or pretended only, on the one side, and the other. So God himself speaks unto his people לָמָּה יָכַחְתֶּם, *Isa.* i. 18. *Go to now and let us plead, reason, or argue together*. And *Job* calls his pleas, or argument in prayer unto God, חִוּכָּיִי, *chap.* xxiii. 4. *I would fill my mouth with arguments*. Wherefore that only hath the true nature of a reproof, which is accompanied with



with reasons and arguments for the evincing of what it tends unto. Rash, groundless, wrathful, precipitate censures, and rebukes are evil in themselves, and in our present case, of no consideration. Nor indeed ought any one to engage in the management of reproofs, who is not furnished with rule and argument to evince their necessity, and render them effectual. Sometimes things may be so circumstanced, as that a reproof shall so carry its own reason and efficacious conviction along with it, that there will be no need of arguing, or pleas to make it useful. So the look of our Blessed Saviour on *Peter*, under the circumstances of his case, was a sufficient reproof, though he spake not one word in its confirmation. But ordinarily cogent reasons are the best conveyances of reproofs to the minds of men, be they of what sort they will.

2. Reproofs do always respect a fault, an evil, a miscarriage, or a sin in them that are reproved. There may be mutual admonitions, and exhortations among Christians, with respect unto sundry things in the course of their faith and obedience, without a regard unto any evil or miscarriage. The general nature of a reproof is an admonition, or exhortation, but it hath its special nature from its regard unto a fault in course, or particular fact. And hence the word signifies also *to chastise*, wherein is a correction for, and the means of a recovery from a miscarriage. *2 Sam. vii. 14. I will reprove him by the rod of men*: that is, chastise him. This therefore is that reproof which we intend, a warning, admonition, or exhortation given unto any, whereby they are rebuked for, and with respect unto some moral evil or sin in their course, way, practice, or any particular miscarriage, such as may render them obnoxious unto divine displeasure, or chastisement: for it is essential unto a regular reproof, that in him who gives it, it may be accompanied with, or do proceed from an apprehension, that the person reproved is by the matter of the reproof rendered obnoxious unto the displeasure of God.

3. It may also be considered, that reproving is not left arbitrarily unto the wills of men. Whatever seems to be so, it loseth its nature, if it be not a duty in him who reproveth, and will come short of its efficacy. No wise man will reprove, but when it is his duty so to do, unless he design the just reproach of a busy body for his reward. The command is general with respect unto brother and neighbour, *Deut. xix. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him*. But as to the particular discharge of this work as a duty, there must be either an especial office, or an especial relation, or a concurrence of circumstances for its warranty. God hath in his wisdom and care given rules and bounds unto our engagement unto duties; without a regulation whereby we shall wander in them with endless dissatisfactions unto ourselves, and unnecessary provocations unto others. But the duty of reproving with the love, wisdom, tenderness, and compassion requir'd in the discharge of it; its motives, ends, and circumstances; its proper rules and limitations fall not under my present consideration: but these things in general were necessary to be premised unto what do so.

That which the text instructs us in may be comprised in this general *Observation*.

*Observ. Reproofs, though accompanied with some sharpness, if rightly received and duly improved, are a mercy and advantage, incomparably above all the satisfactions, which a joint consent with others in sin and pleasures can afford.*

The latter part of the proposition I have mentioned only to express the balance that is proposed by the *Psalmist* between the best and most desirable advantages of wicked society on the one hand, and the sharpest or most displeasing severities that accompany the communion of the righteous, or godly. But I shall not at all handle the comparison, as designing only some directions how men should behave themselves under reproofs, that they may be a kindness, and an excellent oil unto them; or how they may by them obtain spiritual benefit and advantage unto their own souls. And this, however at present the matter may be managed, is of itself of great importance. For as in the state of weakness and imperfection, of mistakes and miscarriages, wherein we are, there is no outward help or aid of more use and advantage unto us, than seasonable reproofs; so in the right receiving and improving of them, as high a trial of the spirits of men, as to their interest in wisdom and folly, doth consist, as in any thing that doth befall them, or wherewith they may be exercised. For as scorers of reproofs, those that hear them unwillingly, that



bear them haughtily and impatiently, with designs of revenge, or disdainful retortions, having the characters of pride and folly indelibly fixed on them by the holy Ghost; so their due admission and improvement is in the same infallible truth represented, as an evident pledge of wisdom, and an effectual means of its increase. This is so much, and so frequently insisted on, in that great treasure of all wisdom, spiritual, natural and political, namely, the *Book of Proverbs*, that it is altogether needless to call over any particular testimonies unto that purpose.

Three things we are to enquire into, in compliance with our present design.

I. How reproofs may be duly received.

II. The reasons why they ought so to be.

III. How they may be duly improved.

I. That we may receive reproofs in a due manner, three things are to be considered. 1. The general qualification of the reprover. 2. The nature of the reproof. 3. The matter of it.

1. The Psalmist here desires that his reprover may be a righteous man: *Let the righteous smite me*, let him reprove me. To give and take reproofs is a dictate of the law of nature, whereby every man is obliged to seek the good of others, and to promote it according to their ability and opportunity. The former is directed by that love, which is due unto others; the latter, by that which is due unto our selves: which two are the great rules, and give measure to the duties of all societies, whether civil or spiritual. Wherefore it doth not evacuate a reproof, or discharge him who is reprov'd, from the duty of attending unto it, that he by whom it is managed, is not righteous, yea is openly wicked: for the duty it self being an effect of the law of nature, it is the same, for the substance of it, by whomsoever it is performed. Yea oftimes such moral, or rather immoral qualifications as render not only the reprover less considerable, but also the reproof it self, until thoroughly weighed and examined, obnoxious unto prejudicate conceptions, do occasion a greater and more signal exercise of grace and wisdom in him that is reprov'd, than would have been stirred up, had all things concurred unto the exact regularity of the reproof. However it is desireable on many accounts, that he who reproves us be himself a righteous person, and be of us esteemed so to be. For as such a one alone will or can have a due sense of the evil reprov'd, with a right principle and end in the discharge of his own duty; so the minds of them that are reprov'd are by their sense of his integrity excluded from those insinuations of evasions, which prejudices and suggestions of just causes of reflections on their reprover will offer unto them; especially without the exercise of singular wisdom and humility will all the advantages of a just reproof be lost, where the allowed practice of greater sins and evils than that reprov'd is daily chargeable on the reprover. Hence is that reflection of our Saviour on the useless, hypocritical diligence of men, in *pulling the mote out of their brother's eyes*, whilst they have beams in their own, *Matth. vii. 3, 4, 5.* The rule in this case is: if the reprover be a righteous person, consider the reprover first, and then the reproof; if he be otherwise, consider the reproof, and the reprover not at all.

2. The nature of a reproof is also to be considered. And this is threefold: for every reproof is either (1.) Authoritative, or (2.) Fraternal, or (3.) merely friendly and occasional.

(1.) Authoritative reproofs are either [1.] Ministerial, or [2.] Parental, or [3.] Despotical.

[1.] There is an especial authority accompanying ministerial reproofs, which we ought especially to consider and improve. Now I understand not hereby those doctrinal reproofs, when in the dispensation of that word of grace and truth, which is *profitable for correction and reproof*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. they speak, and exhort, and *rebuke* the sins of men *with all authority*, Tit. ii. 15. but the occasional application of the word unto individual persons upon their unanswerableness in any thing unto the truth, wherein they have been instructed. For every right reproof is but the orderly application of a rule of truth unto any person under his miscarriage, for his healing and recovery. Where therefore a minister of the Gospel in the preaching of the word doth declare and teach the rule of holy obedience with ministerial authority, if any of the flock committed to his charge shall appear in any thing to walk contrary thereunto, or to have transgressed it in any offensive



instance, as it is his duty, the discharge whereof will be required of him at the great day, particularly to apply the truth unto them in the way of private, personal reproof; so he is still therein accompanied with his ministerial authority, which makes his reproof to be of a peculiar nature, and as such to be accounted for. For as he is thus commanded, as a minister, to *exhort, rebuke, admonish, and reprove* every one of his charge, as occasion shall require; so, in doing of it, he doth discharge and exercise his ministerial office and power. And he that is wise will forego no considerations that may give efficacy unto a just and due reproof; especially not such an one, as if it be neglected, will not only be an aggravation of the evil, for which he is reprov'd, but will also accumulate his guilt with a contempt of the authority of Jesus Christ. Wherefore the rule here is: The more clear and evident the representation of the authority of Christ is in the reproof, the more diligent ought we to be in our attendance unto it, and compliance with it. He is the great reprov'er of his Church, *Rev. iii. 19.* All the use, power, authority, and efficacy of ecclesiastical reproofs, flow originally, and are derived from him. In ministerial reproofs there is the most express and immediate application of his authority made unto the minds of men; which if it be carelessly slighted, or proudly despised, or evacuated by perverse cavillings, as is the manner of some in such cases, it is an open evidence of an heart that never yet sincerely took upon it his law and yoke.

These things are spoken of the personal reproofs that are given by ministers, principally unto those of their respective flocks, as occasion doth require; wherein I shall pray, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, would yet make us all more faithful and diligent, as the season wherein we live doth abundantly require it. But moreover Church censures in admonition and excommunication have the nature and ends of ministerial reproofs. But the handling of their nature and use, with the duties of those persons who justly fall under them, and the benefit which they may reap thereby, is too long and large a subject to be here diverted unto.

[2.] Authoritative reproof is parental. Reproof is indeed one of the greatest and most principal duties of parents towards children, and without which all others for the most part do but pamper them unto slaughter and ruin. Neglect hereof is that which hath filled us with so many *Hophnies, Phineases, and Absaloms*; whose outrageous wickednesses are directly charged on the sinful lenity, and neglect in this matter, even of godly parents. And indeed whereas some parents are openly vicious and debauched even in the sight of their children, in a sensual neglect and contempt of the light of nature, whereby they lose all their authority in reproofing, as well as all care about it; and whereas the most have so little regard unto sin as sin, whilst things are tolerably well in outward concerns, that they neglect the reproof of it as such; and many, through a foolish, contemptible prevalency of fond affection, will take no notice of the sinful follies, extravagancies, and miscarriages of their children, until all things grow desperate with them; but sooth up and applaud them in such effects of pride, vanity, and wantonness, as ought to be most severely reprov'd in them; the woful and dreadful degeneracy of the age wherein we live, owes it self much unto the horrible neglect of parents in this duty. That parental reproof is a duty taught by the law of nature, confirmed in the Scripture, enjoined under severe threatnings and penalties, exemplified in instances of blessings and vengeance, on its performance or neglect; rendred indispensibly necessary by that depravation of our natures, which works in children from the womb, and grows up in strength and efficacy together with them, I should not need to prove, if it lay directly before me, it being a matter of universal acknowledgment. I shall only say, that whereas there is on many accounts an immediate impress of divine authority on parental reproofs, that which children ought to consider and know for themselves is, that a continuance in the neglect, or contempt of them, is a token that seldom fails of approaching temporal and eternal destruction, *Prov. xxx. 17.*

[3.] Authoritative reproof is despotic; namely, that of governors, rulers, and masters of families. This also partakes of the nature of those foregoing, and being a duty founded in the law of nature, as well as enforced by positive divine commands, casts a peculiar obligation to obedience on them that are so reprov'd. And where servants regard not sober and Christian reproofs, as the ordinance of God for their good, they lose the advantages of their condition, and may be looked upon



as unsanctified sufferers in a state of bondage, which hath an especial Character of the first curse upon it.

(2.) Reproof is fraternal, or such as is mutual between the members of the same Church, by virtue of that especial relation wherein they stand, and the obligation thence arising unto mutual watchfulness over each other, with admonitions, exhortations, and reproofs. As this is peculiarly appointed by our Saviour, *Mat. xviii. 15.* in confirmation of the ordinance in the Church of the *Jews* to that purpose, *Levit. xix. 17.* and confirmed by many precepts and directions in the New Testament, *Rom. xv. 18. 1 Thes. v. 14. Heb. iii. 12, 13. chap. xii. 15, 16.* So the neglect of it is that, which hath lost us not only the benefit, but also the very nature of Church societies. Wherefore our improvement of rebukes in this kind, depends much on a due consideration of that duty and love, from whence they do proceed: for this we are by the royal law of charity obliged unto the belief of, where there is not open evidence unto the contrary. And whereas it may be those things, for which we may be thus reprov'd, are not of the greatest importance in themselves, who that is wise will by the neglect of the reproof itself, contract the open guilt of contemning the wisdom, love, and care of Christ in the institution of this ordinance?

(3.) Lastly, Reproofs are friendly or occasional, such as may be administred and managed by any persons, as reasons and opportunities require, from the common principle of universal love unto mankind, especially towards them that are of the household of faith. These also having in them the entire nature of reproofs, will fall under all the ensuing directions, which have a general respect thereunto.

If then we would duly make use of, and improve unto our advantage, the reproofs that may be given us, we are seriously to consider the nature of them, with respect unto those by whom they are managed: for all the things we have mentioned are suited to influence our minds unto a regard of them, and compliance with them.

3. The matter of a reproof is duly to be weighed by him, who designs any benefit thereby. And the first consideration of it is: Whether it be true, or false. I shall not carry them unto a more minute distribution, of the substance and circumstances of the matter intended, of the whole or part of it; but do suppose that from some principal consideration of it, every reproof, as to its matter, may be denominated and esteemed true, or false. And here our own consciences, with due application unto the rule, are the proper judge and umpire. Conscience, if any way enlightned from the word, will give an impartial sentence concerning the guilt or innocence of the person, with respect unto the matter of a reproof. And there can be no more infallible evidence of a miscarriage in such a condition, than when pride, or passion, or prejudice, or any corrupt affection, can either outbrave, or stifle that compliance with a just reproof, which conscience will assuredly tender, *Rom. ii. 14.*

(1.) If a reproof, as to the matter of it, be false, or unjust, and so judged in an unbiass'd conscience, it may be considered in matter of right, and of fact. In the first case the matter may be true, and yet the reproof formally false and evil: in the latter the matter may be false, and yet the reproof an acceptable duty.

[1.] A reproof is false in matter of right, or formally, when we are reprov'd for that as evil, which is indeed our duty to perform. So *David* was fiercely reprov'd by his brother *Eliab* for coming unto the battle against the *Philistines*, ascribing it to his pride, and the naughtiness of his heart. Whereunto he only replied: *What have I done? Is there not a cause?* *1 Sam. xvii. 28, 29.* And *Peter* rebuked our Lord *Jesus Christ* himself for declaring the doctrine of the cross, *Mark viii. 33.* And so we may be reprov'd for the principal duties that God requireth of us. And if men were as free in reprov'g, as they are in reproaching, we should not escape from daily rebukes, for whatever we do in the worship of God. Now though such reproofs generally may be looked on as temptations, and so to be immediately rejected, as they were in the cases instanced in; yet may they sometimes, where they proceed from love, and are managed with moderation, be considered as necessary cautions to look heedfully unto the grounds and reasons we proceed upon in the duties opposed, at which others do take offence.

[2.] If the reproof be false in matter of fact, wherein that is charged on us, and reprov'd in us whereof we are no ways guilty, three things are to be considered that it may not be unuseful unto us.

1.) The



1.) The circumstances of the reprovcr. As (1. Whether he do proceed on some probable mistake: or (2. Credulity and easiness in taking up reports: or (3. On evil, groundless surmises of his own: or (4. From a real godly jealousy, which hath been imposed on, as easily it will be, by some appearances of truth. Without a due consideration of these things we shall never know how to carry it aright towards them, by whom we are reprovcd for that whereof we are not guilty.

2.) Consider aright the difference between a reproof, and a reproach: for they may be both false alike, and that whereof we are reprovcd have no more truth in it, than that wherewith we are reproached. Yea we may be honestly reprovcd for that which is false, and wickedly reproached with that which is true. So *Augustin* calls the language of the maid unto her mother about drinking wine, *durum convitium*, though the matter of it were true enough. But a reproach is the acting of a mind designing of, and rejoycing in evil. Unto a reproof it is essential that it spring from love. *Whom I love I rebuke*, is the absolute rule of these things. Let a man rebuke another, though for that which indeed is false, if it be in love, it is a reproof; but let him rebuke another, though for that which is true, if it be from a mind delighting in evil, it is a reproach; and if it be false, it is moreover a calumny.

3.) Where a man in such cases is fully justified by the testimony of his own conscience, bearing witness unto his integrity and innocency; yet may he greatly miscarry under the occasion, if he attend not diligently unto his own spirit, which most men judge to be set at the utmost liberty under such injurious provocations, as they esteem them. Wherefore to keep our minds unto sedate, christian moderation in such cases, and that we may not lose the advantage of what is befallen us, we ought immediately to apply them unto such other duties as the present occasion doth require. As,

(1. To search our own hearts and ways, whether we have not indeed upon us the guilt of some greater evils than that which is falsely charged on us, or for which we are reprovcd on mistake. And if it appear so upon examination, we shall quickly see what little reason we have to tumultuate, and rise up with indignation against the charge we suffer under. And may we not thence see much of the wisdom and goodness of God, who suffereth us to be exercised with what we can bear off with the impenetrable shield of a good conscience, whilst he graciously hides and covers those greater evils of our hearts, with respect whereunto we cannot but condemn our selves.

(2. To consider that it is not of our selves, that we are not guilty of the evil suspected and charged. No man of sobriety can on any mistake reprove us for any thing, be it never so false, but that it is meerly of sovereign grace that we have not indeed contracted the guilt of it. And humble thankfulness unto God on this occasion, for his real preserving grace, will abate the edge, and take off the fierceness of our indignation, against men for their supposed injurious dealings with us.

(3. Such reproofs, if there be not open malice and continued wickedness manifest in them, are to be looked on as gracious providential warnings, to take heed lest at any time we should be truly overtaken with that which at present we are falsely charg'd withal. We little know the dangers that continually attend us, the temptations wherewith we may be surprized at unawares, nor how near on their account we may be unto any sin or evil, which we judge our selves most remote from, and least obnoxious unto. Neither on the other hand can we readily understand the ways and means whereby the holy, wise God issueth forth those hidden provisions of preventing grace, which are continually administred for our preservation. And no wise man, who understands any thing of the deceitfulness of his own heart, with the numberless numbers of invisible occasions of sin, wherewith he is encompassed continually, but will readily embrace such reproofs, as providential warnings unto watchfulness in those things whereof before he was not aware.

(4. When the mind by these considerations is rendred sedate, and weighed unto christian moderation, then ought a man in such cases patiently and peaceably to undertake the defence of his innocency, and his own vindication. And herein

also



also there is need of much wisdom and circumspection; it being a matter of no small difficulty for a man duly to manage self and innocency, both which are apt to influence us unto some more than ordinary vehemency of spirit.

But the directions which might, and indeed ought to be given under all these particular heads, would by no means be confined unto the limits fixed to this discourse.

(2.) If the matter of the reproof be true in fact, then it is duly to be considered, whether the offence, for which any one is reprov'd, be private, or publick, attended with scandal.

[1.] If it be private, then it is to be weigh'd, whether it was known unto, and observed, in and by the person himself reprov'd, or no, before he was reprov'd. If it were not so known, as we may justly be reprov'd for many things, which through ignorance, or inadvertency, or compliance with the customs of the world, we may have taken no notice of; and if the reproof bring along light and conviction with it, the first especial improvement of such a peculiar reproof is thankfulness to God for it, as a means of deliverance from any way, or work, or path that was unacceptable in his sight. And hence a great prospect may be taken of the following deportment of the mind under other reproofs. For a readiness to take in light and conviction with respect unto any evil, that we are ignorant of, is an evidence of a readiness to submit to the authority of God in any other rebukes that have their convictions going before them: so the heart that is prone to fortify itself by any pleas or pretences against convictions of sin, in what it doth not yet own so to be, will be as prone unto obstinacy under reproofs, in what it cannot but acknowledge to be evil. If it were known before to the person reprov'd, but not supposed by him to be observed by others, under the covert of which imagination, sin often countenanceth itself, that soul will never make a due improvement of a reproof, who is not first sensible of the care and kindness of God, in driving him from that retreat and hold, where the interest of sin had placed its chiefest reserve.

[2.] Sins, so far publick as to give matter of offence or scandal, are the ordinary subject of all orderly reproofs, and therefore need not in particular to be spoken unto.

Having shew'd the nature of reproofs in general, with such considerations of the matter of them, as have afforded occasion unto sundry particular directions relating unto the duty under discussion; it remains, that we explain and confirm the other two generals compris'd in the *Observation* deduced from the text, namely: Why we ought to receive reproofs, orderly, or regularly given unto us, esteeming of them as a singular privilege. And how we may duly improve them unto their proper end, the glory of God, and the spiritual advantage of our own souls.

II. As to the first of these we may observe,

1. That mutual reproofs for the curing of evil, and preventing of danger in one another, are prime dictates of the law of nature, and that obligation, which our participation in the same being, offspring, original, and end, to seek the good of each other, doth lay upon us. This God designed in our creation, and this the rational constitution of our natures directs us unto. To seek and endeavour for each other all that good, whereof we are capable in time, or unto eternity, was indelibly implanted upon our natures, and indispensibly necessary unto that society among ourselves, with the great end of our joint living unto God, for which we were made. All the mutual evils of mankind, whether of persons, or of nations, designed, or perpetrated against one another, are effects of our fatal prevarication from the law of our creation. Hence *Cain*, the first open violent transgressor of the rules and bounds of humane society, thought to justify or excuse himself by a renunciation of that principle, which God in nature had made the foundation of a political or sociable life, with respect unto temporal and eternal ends: *Am I, saith he, my brother's keeper?* Gen. iv. Yea, God had made every man the keeper of his brother so far, as that they should in all things in their opportunities, and unto their power, seek their good, and deliverance from evil. In those things which are good unto us, those which are spiritual and eternal have the preeminence. These nothing can prejudice but sin and moral evils, whose prevention therefore in one another, so far as we are able, is a duty of the law of nature, and the prime effect of that love, which we owe unto the whole offspring of *that one blood*, whereof God hath made all



nations. And one of the most effectual means for that end are the reproofs whereof we treat. And the obligation is the same on those that give them, and those to whom they are given, with respect unto their several interests in this duty. Wherefore to neglect, to despise, not thankfully to receive such reproofs, as are justly and regularly given unto us at any time, is to contemn the law of our creation, and to trample on the prime effect of fraternal love. Yea, to despise reproofs, and to discountenance the discharge of that duty, is to open a door unto that mutual hatred and dislike, which in the sight of God is murder: See *Levit. xix. 17*, with *1 John iii. 15*. Let us therefore look to ourselves, for there is no greater sign of a degeneracy from the law, and all the ends of our creation, than an unwillingness to receive reproofs, justly deserved, and regularly administered; or not to esteem of them, as a blessed effect of the wisdom and goodness of God towards us.

2. Whereas the light of nature is variously obscured, and its directive power debilitated in us, God hath renewed on us an obligation unto this duty by particular institutions, both under the old Testament and the New. The truth is, the efficacy of the law of creation, as unto moral duties, being exceedingly impaired by the entrance of sin; and the exercise of original, native love towards mankind being impeded and obstructed by that confusion and disorder, whereinto the whole state of mankind was cast by sin, every one thereby being made the enemy of another, as the Apostle declares, *Tit. iii. 3*. not being cured by that coalescency into evil societies which respects only political and temporal ends, the discharge of this duty was utterly lost, at least beyond that which was merely parental. Wherefore God in the institution of his Church, both under the Old Testament and the New, did mould men into such peculiar societies and relations, as wherein way might be made meet again for the exercise thereof. He hath so disposed of us, that every one may know every one whom he is obliged to reprove, and every one may know every one whom he is obliged to hear. And as he hath hereby cured that confusion we were cast into, which was obstructive of the exercise of this duty; so by the renovation of positive commands, attended with instructions, directions, promises, and threatnings, enforcing the giving and receiving of reproofs with respect unto moral and spiritual ends, he hath relieved us against that obscurity of natural light, which we before laboured under. Should I go to express the commands, directions, exhortations, promises, and threatnings, which are given in the Scripture to this purpose, it would be a work as endless, as I suppose it needless, to all that are conversant in the Holy Writings. It may suffice unto our present purpose, that there being an express institution of God for the giving and taking of reproofs, and that an effect of infinite goodness, benignity, and love towards us; not thankfully to receive reproofs, when it is our lot to deserve them, and to have them, is to despise the authority of God over us, and his gracious care for us. When therefore it befalleth any to be justly and orderly reproved, let him call to mind the authority and love of God therein; which will quickly give him that sense of their worth and excellency, as will make him thankful for them; which is the first step unto their due improvement.

3. A due consideration of the use, benefit, and advantage of them, will give them a ready admission into our minds and affections. Who knows how many souls, that are now at rest with God, have been prevented by reproofs, as the outward means, from going down into the pit? Unto how many have they been an occasion of conversion and sincere turning unto God? How many have been recovered by them from a state of backsliding, and awakened from a secure sleep in sin? How many great and bloody sins hath the perpetration of been obviated by them? How many snares of temptations have they been the means to break and cancel? What revivings have they been to grace, what disappointments unto the snares of Satan, Who can declare? The advantages which the souls of men do, or might receive every day by them, is more to be valued than all earthly treasures whatever. And shall any of us, when it comes to be our concern, through a predominancy of pride, passion, and prejudice; or through cursed sloth and security, the usual means of the defeatment of these advantages; manifest ourselves to have no interest in, or valuation of these things, by an unreadiness or unwillingness to receive reproofs, when tendred unto us in the way, and according to the mind of God?

III. But now suppose we are willing to receive them, it will be enquired in the last place, what considerations may further us in their due improvement, and what directions may be given thereunto.



An answer to this enquiry shall shut up this discourse. And I shall say hereunto,

1. If there be not open evidence unto the contrary, it is our duty to judge that every reproof is given us in a way of duty. This will take off offence with respect unto the reprover, which unjustly taken is an assured entrance into a way of losing all benefit and advantage by the reproof. The reason why any man doth regularly reprove another, is because God requireth him so to, and by his command hath made it his duty towards him that is reproved. And do we judge it reasonable, that one should neglect his duty towards God and us, and in some degree or other make himself guilty of our sins, for no other cause, but lest we should be displeased, that we are not suffered to sin securely, and it may be to perish eternally? And if we are convinced that it is the duty of another to reprove us, we cannot but be convinced that it is our duty to hearken and attend thereunto. And this will fix the mind unto a due consideration of the present duty that lies before us, and what is our just concernment in the reproof. Besides, if it be done in a way of duty, it is done in love: for all orderly rebukes are effects of love. And if we are convinced of any one, that he doth reprove in a way of duty, we must be satisfied that what he doth proceedeth from love, without by ends or dissimulation. For what doth not so, be it what it will, belongs not to rebuking in a way of duty. And this will remove all obstructing prejudices in all who have the least gracious ingenuity. *Ahab* despised the warning of *Micaiah*, because he thought they mutually hated one another; he knew how it was with himself, and falsely so judged of the prophet, by his necessary sharpness towards him. But where there are such surmises, all advantages of reproofs will be assuredly lost. Where therefore our minds are satisfied that any reproof is an effect of love, and given in a way of duty, *Dimidium facti*, we are half way in the discharge of the duty directed unto.

2. Take heed of cherishing habitually such disorders, vices, and distempers of mind, as are contrary unto this duty, and will frustrate the design of it. Such are,

(1.) Hastiness of spirit. Some mens minds do with such fury apply themselves unto their first apprehension of things, that they cast the whole soul into disorder, and render it incapable of farther rational considerations. There may be, it is possible, some failures and mistakes in useful and necessary reproofs, in matter, manner, circumstance, some way, or other. This immediately is seized on by men of hasty spirits (a vice and folly sufficiently condemned in Scripture) turned unto a provocation, made a matter of strife and dispute, until the whole advantage of the reproof is utterly lost and vanisheth. A quiet, gentle, considerative, sedate frame of spirit is required unto this duty.

(2.) Pride, and haughtiness of mind, self-conceit, elation of spirit, which will be inseparably accompanied with the contempt of others, and a scorn that any should think themselves either so much wiser, or so much better than ourselves, as to reprove us in any kind, are a fenced wall against any benefit, or advantage by reproofs; yea, things that will turn judgment into hemlock, and the most sovereign antidote into poison. No wild beast in a toil doth more rave, and tear, and rend, than a proud man when he is reproved. And therefore he who manifests himself so to be, hath secured himself from being any more troubled by serious reproofs from any wise man whatever. See *Prov.* ix. 7, 8.

(3.) Prejudices, which are so variously occasioned, as it were endless to recount. If now we make it not our constant business to purge our minds from these depraved affections, they will never fail effectually to exert themselves on all occasions to the utter defeatment of all use in, or benefit by the most necessary and regular reproofs.

3. Reckon assuredly, that a fault, a miscarriage, which any one is duly reproved for, if the reproof be not received and improved as it ought, is not only aggravated, but accumulated with a new crime, and marked with a dangerous token of an incurable evil: see *Prov.* xxix. 1. Let men do what they can, bear themselves high in their expressions, grow angry, passionate, excuse, or palliate; unless they are scared and profligately obstinate, their own consciences will take part with a just and regular reproof. If hereupon they come not up to amendment, their guilt is increased by the occasional excitation of the light of conscience to give it an especial charge. And there is an additional sin in the contempt of the reproof itself. But that which principally should make men careful, and even tremble in this case is, that they are put on a trial, whether ever they will forsake the evil of their ways and doings,

or



or no. For he who is orderly reprov'd for any fault, and neglects, or despiseth the rebuke, can have no assurance that he shall ever be delivered from the evil rebuked; but hath just cause to fear, that he is entering into a course of hardness and impenitency.

4. It is useful unto the same end, immediately to compare the reproof with the word of truth. This is the measure, standard, and directory of all duties, whereunto in all dubious cases we should immediately retreat for advice and counsel. And whereas there are two things considerable in a reproof; first, the matter of it, that it be true, and a just cause, or reason of a rebuke; and, secondly, the right which the reprover hath unto this duty, with the rule which he walked by therein; if both these for the substance of them prove to be justified by the Scripture, then have we in such a case no more to do with the reprover, nor any of his circumstances, but immediately and directly with God himself: for where he gives express warranty and direction for a duty in his word, his own authority is as directly exerted thereby, as if he spoke unto us from heaven. Hereby will the mind be prevented from many wandrings, and vain reliefs, which foolish imagination will suggest, and be bound up unto its present duty. Let our unwillingness to be reprov'd be what it will, as also our prejudices against our reprover; if we are not at least free to bring the consideration and examination of the one and the other unto the word of truth, it is because our deeds are evil, and therefore we love darkness more than light. No milder, nor more gentle censure can be pass'd on any, who is not free to bring any reproof, that may be given him, unto an impartial trial by the word, whether it be according to the mind of God, or no. If this be done, and conviction of its truth and necessity do then appear; then let the soul know it hath to do with God himself, and wisely consider what answer he will return, what account he will give unto him. Wherefore,

5. The best way to keep our souls in a readiness rightly to receive, and duly to improve such reproofs, as may regularly be given us by any, is to keep and preserve our souls and spirits in a constant awe and reverence of the reproofs of God, which are recorded in his word. The neglect, or contempt of these reproofs, is that which the generality of mankind do split themselves upon, and perish eternally. This is so fully and graphically expressed, *Prov. i.* that nothing can be added thereunto. And the great means whereby much hardness comes upon others, through the deceitfulness of sin, is want of keeping up a due sense or reverence of divine reproofs and threatnings on their souls. When this is done, when our hearts are kept up unto an awful regard of them, exercis'd with a continual meditation on them, made tender, careful, watchful by them, any just reproof from any, that falls in compliance with them, will be conscientiously observed, and carefully improved.

6. We shall fail in this duty, unless we are always accompanied with a deep sense of our frailty, weakness, readiness to halt, or miscarry, and thereon a necessity of all the ordinances and visitations of God, which are designed to preserve our souls. Unless we have due apprehensions of our own state and condition here, we shall never kindly receive warnings beforehand to avoid approaching dangers; nor duly improve rebukes for being overtaken with them. It is the humble soul that feareth always, and that from a sense of its own weakness, yea the treacheries and deceitfulness of its heart, with the power of those temptations, whereunto it is continually expos'd, that is ever like to make work of the duty here directed unto.

S E R-



## \* S E R M O N XLIV.

The Chamber of Imagery in the Church of *Rome* laid open: Or, an Antidote against Popery.

I P E T. ii. 3.

*If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

**W**Hen false worship had prevailed in the Church of old, unto its ruin, God shewed and represented it unto his prophet, under the name and appearance of a *chamber of imagery*, Ezek. viii. 11, 12. For therein were pourtrayed all the abominations wherewith the worship of God was defiled, and religion corrupted. Things relating unto divine truth and worship, have had again the same event in the world, especially in the Church of *Rome*. And my present design is to take a view of the chambers of their imagery, and to shew what was the occasion, and what were the means of their erection; and in them we shall see all the abomination wherewith the divine worship of the Gospel hath been corrupted, and christian religion ruined. Unto this end it will be necessary to lay down some such principles of sacred truths, as will demonstrate and evince the grounds and causes of that transformation of the substance and power of religion into a lifeless image, which shall be proved to have fallen out amongst them. And because I intend their benefit principally who resolve all their persuasion in religion into the word of God, I shall deduce these principles from that passage of it in 1 *Pet.* ii. 1, 2, 3.

*Verse 1.* contains an exhortation unto, or an injunction of universal holiness, by the laying aside, or casting out whatever is contrary thereunto; *Wherefore lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisy, and envy, and all evil speaking;* the rule whereof extends unto all other vicious habits of mind whatever.

And in *ver. 2.* there is a profession of the means whereby this end may be attained, namely, how any one may be so strengthened in grace, as to cast out all such sinful inclinations and practices as are contrary unto the holiness required of us, which is the divine word; compared therefore unto food, which is the means of preserving natural life, and of increasing its strength: *As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*

Hereon the Apostle proceeds in *v. 3.* to declare the condition whereon our profiting, growing, and thriving by the word doth depend; and this is an experience of its power, as it is the instrument of God, whereby he conveys his grace unto us: *If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* See 1 *Thes.* i. 5. Therein lies the first and chief principle of our ensuing demonstration, and it is this:

\* This Sermon was preach'd, at the Morning Exercise at Cripplegate, 1682. In answer to this question, How is the practical love of Truth the best Preservative against Popery?



*Principle I.* All the benefit and advantage which any men do or may receive by the word, or the truths of the Gospel, depend on an experience of its power and efficacy, in communicating the grace of God unto their souls.

This principle is evident in it self, and not to be questioned by any, but such as never had the least real sense of religion on their own minds. Besides, it is evidently contained in the testimony of the Apostle before laid down.

Hereunto three other principles of equal evidence with it self are supposed, and virtually contained in it.

*Principle II.* There is a power and efficacy in the word, and the preaching of it, *Rom. i. 16. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation.*

It hath a divine power; the power of God accompanying it, and put forth in it, unto its proper ends: *For the word of God is quick and powerful,* Heb. iv. 12.

*Principle III.* The power that is in the word of God, consists in its efficacy to communicate the grace of God unto the souls of men.

In and by it they *taste that the Lord is gracious*; that is, its efficacy unto its proper ends. These are salvation, with all things requisite thereunto; such as the illumination of our minds, and the renovation of our natures, the justification of our persons, the life of God in holy worship, and obedience, all leading unto our eternal enjoyment of him. These are the ends whereunto the Gospel is designed in the wisdom of God, whereunto its efficacy is confined.

*Principle IV.* There is an experience to be obtained of the power and efficacy of the word.

In that place of the Apostle it is expressed by *tasting*. But there is something antecedent unto their *tasting*, specially so called, and something consequent unto it, both inseparable from it, and therefore belonging unto the experience whereof we speak. Wherefore,

1. The first thing required hereunto is light; that is, a spiritual supernatural light, enabling us to discern the wisdom, will and mind of God in the word, in a spiritual manner, without which we can have no experience of its power. Hence *the Gospel is hid unto them that perish*, though it be outwardly declared unto them, *2 Cor. iii. 4.* This is the only means which lets into the mind and conscience a sense of this efficacy. This, in the increases of it, the Apostle prays for on the behalf of believers, that they may have this experience, *Eph. i. 16, 17, 18, 19. chap. iii. 16, 17, 18, 19.* and declares the nature of it, *2 Cor. iv. 6.*

2. The taste intended follows hereon; wherein consists the life and substance of the experience pleaded for. And this taste is a spiritual sense of the goodness, power and efficacy of the word, and the things contained in it, in the conveyance of the grace of God unto our souls, in the instances mentioned, and others of a like nature: for in a taste, there is a sweetness unto the palate, and a satisfaction unto the appetite. By the one, in this taste our minds are refreshed; and by the other our souls are nourished: of both believers have an experience. And this is let into the mind by spiritual light, without which nothing of it is attainable. *God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shine into your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ,* *2 Cor. iv. 6.*

3. To compleat the experience intended, there follows hereon a conformity in the whole soul and conversation unto the truth of the word, or the mind of God in it, wrought in us by its power and efficacy. So the Apostle expresses it, *Eph. iv. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. If so be that you have heard him, and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus; that you put off concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

Hereupon follows our last principle, which is the immediate foundation of the ensuing discourse, or that which is to be confirmed; and it is this:

*Principle V.* The loss of an experience of the power of religion, hath been the cause of the loss of the truth of religion; or it hath been the cause of rejecting its substance, and setting up a shadow or image in the room of it.

This transformation of all things in religion, began and proceeded on these grounds. Those who had the conduct of it, were always possessed of the general notions



notions of truth, which they could not forego without a total renunciation of the Gospel it self. But having lost all experience of this power in themselves, they wrested them unto things quite of another nature, destructive to the truth, as well as devoid of its power: hereon it came to pass that there was a dead image made and set up of religion in all the parts of it, called by the name of that which was true and living, but utterly lost. All experience, I say, of the power and efficacy of the mystery of the Gospel, and the truth of it, in communicating the grace of God unto the souls of men being lost, retaining the general notion of it, they contrived and framed an outward image or representation of them, suited unto their ignorance and superstition. Thus was the truth of religion once almost totally lost in the world, as we shall see; neither will it ever be lost any other way, or by any other means. When Churches or nations are possessed of the truth and the profession of it, it is not laws, nor fines, nor imprisonments, nor gibbets, nor fires, that shall ever dispossess them, or deprive them of it. Whilst an experience of the power of religion continued in the primitive times, all the bloody rage and cruelty of the world, all the craft of Satan, and the subtilty of seducers, who abounded, did utterly fail in attempting to deprive Christians of the truth, and the profession of it. But when this began to decay, and be lost amongst them, they were quickly deceived, and drawn off from the simplicity of the Gospel. Upon the reformation of religion in these parts of the world, when the truth was received in the love and power of it, and multitudes had experience of the spiritual benefit and advantage which they received thereby, in liberty, holiness and peace; all the prisons, tortures, swords and fires, that were applied unto its extirpation, did nothing but diffuse the profession of it, and root it more firmly in the minds of men. It cannot be lost but by another way, and other means. The Jesuits and their associates, have been for an hundred years, contriving methods and arts for the dispossessing nations and Churches of the truth which they have received, and the introducing the Romish superstition. They have written books about it, and practised according to their principles in every kingdom and state of *Europe*, who own the Protestant religion. But the folly of most of their pretended arts and devices unto this end, hath been ridiculous and unsuccessful: and what they have added hereunto of force, hath been divinely defeated. There is but one way, one effectual engine to deprive any people of the profession of the truth which they have once received; and that is, by leading them into such prophaness and ignorance, as whereby they may lose all experience of its power and efficacy in communicating the grace of God unto their souls, and therein of all sense of the advantage which they might have had by it. When this is done, men will as easily lay aside the profession of religion, as burdensome cloaths in summer.

There is much talk of a plot and conspiracy to destroy the Protestant religion, and introduce popery again amongst us; they may do well to take care thereof, who are concern'd in publick affairs: but as unto the event, there is but one conspiracy that is greatly to be feared in this matter, and that is between Satan and the lusts of men; if they can prevail to deprive the generality of men of an experience in their own minds of the power and efficacy of the truth, with the spiritual advantage which they may have thereby, they will give them up to be an easy prey unto the other designers. And there are two engines that are applied unto this purpose; the one is ignorance, the other is prophaness, or sensuality of life. Whenever either of these prevails, the experience intended must necessarily be lost and excluded: and the means of their prevailing, are want of due instruction by those who are the leaders of the people, and the encouragement of sensuality, by impunity and great examples. This is the only formidable conspiracy against the profession of the truth in this nation, without whose aid, all power and force will be frustrate in the issue. And as there is a great appearance in divine permission of such a state of things at present amongst us, so if they be manag'd by counsel also, and that those ways of ignorance and sensuality, are countenanced and promoted for this very end, that the power of truth being lost, the profession of it may be given up on easy terms, there is nothing but sovereign grace that can prevent the design. For the principle which we have laid down, is uncontrollable in reason and experience; namely, that the loss of an experience of the power of religion, will issue one way or other, in the loss of the truth of religion, and the profession



sion of it. Whence is it that so many corrupt opinions have made such an inroad on the Protestant religion, and the profession of it? Is it not from hence, that many have lost an experience of the power and efficacy of the truth, and so have parted with it? Whence is it that prophaneſs and ſenſuality of life, with all manner of corrupt luſts of the fleſh, have grown up, unto the ſhame of profeſſion? Is it not from the cauſe, as the Apoſtle expreſſly declares it comes by? *2 Tim. iv. 2, 3, 4, 5.* One way or other the loſs of experience of the power of truth, will end in the loſs of the profeſſion of it.

But I proceed unto the inſtance which I do deſign in the Church of *Rome*. For the religion of it at this day is nothing but a dead image of the Goſpel, erected in the loſs of an experience of its ſpiritual power, overthrowing its uſe, with all its ends, being ſuited to the taſte of men, carnal, ignorant, and ſuperſtitious. This I ſhall make evident by all ſorts of inſtances in things relating to the perſon and offices of Chriſt; the ſtate, order, and worſhip of the Church; with the graces and duties of obedience required in the Goſpel. And in all, my principal deſign is to demonſtrate what is the only way and means of ſecuring our own ſouls, any Church or nation, from being enſnared with, or prevailed againſt by popery.

1. It is a general notion of truth, that the Lord Chriſt in his perſon and grace, is to be propoſed and repreſented unto men as the principal object of their faith and love.

He himſelf in his divine perſon, is abſolutely inviſible unto us, and as unto his human nature abſent from us. For the heavens muſt receive him until the time of the reſtitution of all things. There muſt therefore an image or repreſentation of him be made unto our minds, or he cannot be the proper object of our faith, truſt, love, and delight. This is done in the Goſpel, and the preaching of it; for therein he is *evidently ſet forth before our eyes, as crucified amongſt us*, *Gal. iii. 1.* So alſo are all the other concerns of his perſon and offices therein, clearly propoſed unto us; yea, this is the principal end of the Goſpel, namely, to make a due repreſentation of the perſon, offices, grace, and glory of Chriſt, unto the ſouls of men, that they may believe in him, and *believing, have eternal life*, *John xx. 31.* Upon this repreſentation made of Chriſt and his glory in the Goſpel, and the preaching of it, believers have an experience of the power and efficacy of the divine truth contained therein, in the way before mentioned, as the Apoſtle declares, *2 Cor. iii. 18. For we all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, even as by the ſpirit of the Lord.* Having a ſpiritual light to diſcern and behold the glory of Chriſt, as repreſented in the glaſs of the Goſpel, they have experience of its transforming power and efficacy, changing them into the likenes of the image repreſented unto them, that is, of Chriſt himſelf; which is the ſaving effect of Goſpel power. But this ſpiritual light was loſt among men, through the efficacy of their darkneſs and unbelief; they were not able to diſcover the glory of Chriſt, as revealed and propoſed in the Goſpel, ſo as to make him the preſent object of their faith and love. And this light being loſt, they could have no experience of the power of divine truth concerning him, changing them into his image. They could make no affecting diſcovery of him in the Scripture. All things therein were dark and confuſed, or at leaſt ſeemed an inacceſſible myſtery, which they could not reduce to practice. Hence thoſe who had got the publick conduct of religion, drove the people from reading the Scripture, as that which was of no uſe, but rather dangerous unto them. What ſhall theſe men then betake themſelves unto? Shall they reject the notion in general, that there ought to be ſuch a repreſentation made of Chriſt unto the minds of men, as to inflame their devotion, to excite their faith, and ſtir up their affection to him? This cannot be done without an open renunciation of him, and of the Goſpel as a fable. Wherefore they will find out another way for it, another means, unto the ſame end. And this is, by making images of him of wood and ſtone, or gold and ſilver, or painting on them. Hereby they ſuppoſed he would be made preſent unto his worſhipers. That he would be ſo repreſented unto them, as that they ſhould be immediately ſtirred up unto the embraces of faith and love. And herein they found ſenſible effects unto their great ſatisfaction: for their minds being dark, carnal, and prone to ſuperſtition, as are the minds of all men by nature, they could ſee nothing in the ſpiritual repreſentation of him in the Goſpel, that had any power on them, or did in any meaſure affect them.



them. In these images, by the means of sight and imagination they found that which did really work upon their affections, and as they thought, did excite them unto the love of Christ.

And this was the true original of all the imagery in the Church of *Rome*, as something of the same nature in general was of all the image worship in the world. So the *Israelites* in the wilderness when they made the golden calf, did it to have a representation of a deity near unto them, in such a visible manner, as that their souls might be affected with it; so they expressed themselves, *Exod. xxxii. 1.* Wherefore in this state; under a loss of spiritual light and experience, men of superstitious minds, found themselves intangled. They knew it necessary that there should be such a representation made of Christ, as might render him a present object of faith and love, wherewith they might be immediately affected. How this was done in the Gospel, they could not understand, nor obtain any experience of the power and efficacy of it unto this end. Yet the principle itself must be retain'd, as that without which there could be no religion; wherefore to extricate themselves out of this difficulty, they brake through all God's commands to the contrary, and betook themselves to the making images of Christ, and their adoration. And from small beginnings, according as darkness and superstition encreased in the minds of men, there was a progress in this practice, until these images took the whole work of representing Christ and his glory, out of the hands, as it were, of the Gospel, and appropriated it unto themselves. For I do not speak of them now so much as they are images of Christ, or objects of adoration; as of their being dead images of the Gospel; that is, somewhat set up in the room of the Gospel, and for the ends of it, as means of teaching and instruction. They shall do the work which the Gospel was design'd of God to do: for as unto this end of the representation of Christ, as the present object of the faith and love of man, with an efficacy to work upon their affections, there is in the Church of *Rome* a thousand times more ascribed unto them, than unto the Gospel itself. The whole matter is stated by the Apostle, *Rom. x. 6, 7, 8.* *The righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend unto heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring Christ up again from the dead) but what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach.* The enquiry is, how we may be made partakers of Christ, and righteousness by him; or how we may have an interest in him, or have him present with us. This, saith the Apostle, is done by the word of the Gospel which is preached, which is nigh unto us in our mouths, and in our hearts; no, say these men, we cannot understand how it should be so; we do not find that it is so, that Christ is made nigh unto us, present with us by this word. Wherefore we will ascend into heaven to bring down Christ from above; for we will make images of him in his glorious state in heaven, and thereby he will be present with us, or nigh unto us. And we will descend into the deep, to bring up Christ again from the dead; and we will do it, by making first crucifixes, and then images of his glorious resurrection, bringing him again unto us from the dead. This shall be in the place and room of that word of the Gospel which you pretend to be alone useful and effectual unto these ends.

This therefore is evident, that the introduction of this abomination in principle and practice, destructive unto the souls of men, took its rise from the loss of an experience of the representation of Christ in the Gospel, and the transforming power in the minds of men, which it is accompanied with, in them that believe. *Make us Gods*, say the *Israelites*, *to go before us, for as for this man Moses* (who represented God unto us) *we know not what is become of him.* What would you have men do? Would you have them live without all sense of the presence of Christ with them, or being nigh unto them? Shall they have no representation of him? No, no, make us Gods that may go before us; let us have images unto this end; for how else may it be done, we cannot understand. And this is the reason of their obstinacy in this practice against all means of conviction: yea they live hereon in a perpetual contradiction unto themselves: their temples are full of graven images like the house of *Micah*, houses of God; and yet in them are the Scriptures (though in a tongue unknown to the people) wherein that practice is utterly condemned, that a man would think them distracted to hear what their book says;



and to see what they do in the same place. But nothing will reach unto their conviction until the vail of blindness and ignorance be taken from their minds; until they have spiritual light enabling them to discern the glory of Christ as represented in the Gospel, and to let in an experience of the transforming power and efficacy of that revelation in their own souls, they will never part with that means for the same end, which they are sensible of, to be useful unto it; and which is suited unto their inclination. Whatever be the issue, though it cost them their souls, they will not part with what they find, as they suppose, so useful unto their great end of making Christ nigh unto them; for that, wherein they can see nothing of it, and of whose power they can have no experience.

But the principal design of this discourse, is to warn others of these abominations, and to direct unto their avoidance: for if they should be outwardly pressed unto the practice of this idolatry, whatever is of carnal affection, of blind devotion, or superstition in them, will quickly be won over unto a conspiracy against their convictions. Nothing will then secure them but an experience of the efficacy of that representation which is made of Christ in the Gospel. It is therefore the wisdom and duty of all those who desire a stability in the profession of the truth, continually to endeavour after this experience, and an increase in it. He who lives in the exercise of faith and love in the Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Gospel, as evidently crucified, and evidently exalted therein, and finds the fruit of his so doing in his own soul, will be preserved in the time of trial. Without this, men will at last begin to think that it is better to have a false Christ than none at all; they will suppose that something is to be found in images, when they can find nothing in the Gospel.

2. It is a prevalent notion of truth, that the worship of God ought to be beautiful and glorious.

The very light of nature seems to direct unto conceptions hereof. What is not so, may be justly rejected, as unbecoming the divine Majesty; and therefore the more holy and heavenly any religion pretends to be, the more glorious is the worship prescribed in it, or ought so to be: yea, the true worship of God is the height and excellency of all glory in this world; it is inferior unto nothing, but that which is in heaven, which it is the beginning of, the way unto, and the best preparation for. Accordingly even that worship is declared to be glorious, and that in an eminent manner, above all, the outward worship of the the Old Testament in the tabernacle and temple, whose glory was great; and as unto external pomp, inimitable. To this purpose the Apostle disputes at large, *2 Cor.* lii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. This therefore is agreed, that there ought to be beauty and glory in divine worship, and that they are most eminently in that which is directed and required in the Gospel. But withal the Apostle declares in the same place, that this glory is spiritual, and not carnal; so did our Lord Jesus Christ foretel that it should be; and that unto that end all distinction of places, with all outward advantages and ornaments belonging unto them, should be taken away, *John* iv. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

It belongs therefore unto our present design to give a brief account of its glory, and wherein it excels all other ways of divine worship that ever were in the world; even that under the Old Testament, which was of divine institution, wherein all things were ordered for beauty and glory. And it may be given in the instances that ensue.

(1.) The express object of it is God, not as absolutely considered, but as existing in three persons, of Father, Son, and holy Spirit. This is the principal glory of Christian religion and its worship. Under the Old Testament the conceptions of the Church about the existence of the divine nature in distinct persons, were very dark and obscure; for the full revelation of it was not to be made, but in the distinct actions of each person in the works of redemption and salvation of the Church; that is, in the incarnation of the Son, and mission of the Spirit, after he was glorified, *John* vii. 39. And in all the ways of natural worship, there was never the least shadow of any respect hereunto. But this is the foundation of all the glory of evangelical worship. The object of it in the faith of the worshiper, is the holy Trinity, and it consists in an ascription of divine glory unto each person in the same individual nature by the same act of the mind; where this is not, there is no glory in religious worship.

(2.) Its



(1.) Its glory consists in that constant respect which it hath unto each divine person, as unto their peculiar work and actings for the salvation of the Church; so it is described, *Eph. ii. 18. Through him, that is, the Son as mediator, we have our access by one Spirit unto the Father.* This is the immediate glory of evangelical worship, comprehensive of all the graces and privileges of the Gospel. And to suppose that the glory of it doth consist in any thing but the light, graces, and privileges which it doth itself exhibit, is a vain imagination: it will not borrow glory from the invention of men. We shall therefore a little consider it as it is here represented by the Apostle.

[1.] The ultimate object of it, under this consideration, is God as the Father: *We have an access therein unto the Father.* And this consideration in our worship of God as a Father, relating unto the whole dispensation of his love and grace, by Jesus Christ, as he is his God, and our God, his Father, and our Father, is peculiar unto Gospel-worship, and contains a signal part of its glory. We do not only worship God as a Father, so the very heathens had a notion that he was the Father of all things; but we worship him, who is the Father, and as he is so, both in relation to the eternal generation of the Son, and the communication of grace by him unto us, as our Father; *So no man hath seen God at anytime; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, John i. 18.* This access in our worship unto the person of the Father, as in heaven, the holy place above, as on a throne of grace, is the glory of the Gospel. See *Matth. vi. 9. Heb. iv. 16. chap. x. 19, 20, 21.*

[2.] The Son is here considered as a Mediator; through him we have this access unto the Father. This is the glory that was hidden from former ages, but brought to light, and display'd by the Gospel. So speaks our blessed Saviour himself unto his disciples; *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you: hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, John xvi. 23, 24.* To ask God expressly in the name of the Son, as mediator, belongs unto the glory of the Gospel-worship.

The especial instances of this glory are more than can be numerated. The chief of them may be reduced to these three heads.

1.) It is he who makes both the persons of the worshipers, and their duties accepted of God. See *Heb. ii. 17, 18. chap. iv. 16. chap. x. 19.*

2.) He is the administrator of all the worship of the Church in the holy place above, as its great high priest over the house of God, *Heb. viii. 2. Rev. viii. 3.*

3.) His presence with and among Gospel-worshipers in their worship, gives it glory. This he declares and promises, *Matth. xviii. 19, 20. If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* All success of the prayers of the Church dependeth on, and ariseth from the presence of Christ amongst them: he is so present for their assistance, and for their consolation. This presence of a living Christ, and not a dead crucifix, gives glory to divine worship. He who sees not the glory of this worship, from its relation unto Christ, is a stranger unto the Gospel, with all the light, graces and privileges of it.

[3.] It is in one spirit that we have access unto God in his worship; and in his administration doth the Apostle place the glory of it, in opposition unto all the glory of the Old Testament, as doth our Lord Jesus Christ also in the place before referred unto; for,

1.) The whole ability for the observance and performance of it, according to the mind of God, is from him alone. His communication of grace and gifts unto the Church, is that alone which makes it to give glory to God in his divine service. If this should cease, all acceptable worship would cease in the world. To think to observe the worship of the Gospel, without the aid and assistance of the spirit of the Gospel, is a lewd imagination. But where he is, there is liberty and glory, *2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.*

2.) By him the sanctified minds of believers are made temples of God, and so the principle seal of evangelical worship, *1 Cor. iii. 16. chap. vi. 8.* This temple being of God's own framing, and of his own adorning by his spirit, is a much more glorious fabrick than any that the hands of men can erect.

3.) By



3.) By him is the Church led into internal communion and converse with God in Christ, in light, love, and delight, with holy boldness; the glory whereof is expressed by the Apostle, *Heb. x. 19, 21, 22.*

In these things, I say, doth the true glory of evangelical worship consist; and if it doth not, it hath no glory in comparison of that which did excel in the old legal worship. For the wit of man was never yet able to set it off with half the outward beauty and glory that was in the worship of the temple. But herein it is that it not only leaves no glory thereunto in comparison, but doth unspeakably excel whatever the wit and wealth of men can extend unto.

But there is a spiritual light required that we may discern the glory of this worship, and have thereby an experience of its power and efficacy in reference unto the ends of its appointment. This the Church of believers hath. They see it, as it is a blessed means of giving glory unto God, and of receiving gracious communications from him, which are the ends of all the divine institutions of worship; and they have therein such an experience of its efficacy, as gives rest, and peace, and satisfaction unto their souls. For they find, that as their worship directs them unto a blessed view by faith, of God in his ineffable existence, with the glorious actings of each person in the dispensation of grace, which fills their hearts with joy unspeakable; so also that all graces are exercised, increased and strengthened in the observance of it, with love and delight.

But all light into, all perceptions of this glory, all experience of its power, was amongst the most lost in the world. I intend in all these instances, the time of the papal apostacy. Those who had the conduct of religion could discern no glory in these things, nor obtain any experience of their power: be the worship what it will, they can see no glory in it, nor did it give any satisfaction to their minds; for having no light to discern its glory, they could have no experience of its power and efficacy. What then shall they do? The notion must be retained, that divine worship is to be beautiful and glorious. But in the spiritual worship of the Gospel, they could see nothing thereof; wherefore they thought necessary to make a glory for it, or to dimiss it out of the world, and set up such an image of it, as might appear beautiful unto their fleshly minds, and give them satisfaction. To this end they set their inventions on work, to find out ceremonies, vestments, gestures, ornaments, musick, altars, images, paintings, with prescriptions of great bodily veneration. This pageantry they call the beauty, the order, the glory of divine worship. This is that which they see and feel, and which, as they judge, doth dispose their minds unto devotion; without it they know not how to pay any reverence unto God himself; and when it is wanting, whatever be the life, the power, the spirituality of the worship in the worshipers, whatever be its efficacy unto all the proper ends of it, however it be ordered according unto the prescription of the word, it is unto them empty, indecent, they can neither see beauty nor glory in it. This light and experience being lost, the introduction of beggarly elements and carnal ceremonies in the worship of the Church, with attempts to render it decorous and beautiful, by superstitious rites and observances, wherewith it hath been defiled and corrupted, as it was and is in the Church of *Rome*, was nothing but the setting up a deformed image in the room of it: and this they are pleased withal. The beauty and glory which carving, and painting, and imbroidered vestures, and musical incantations, and postures of veneration, do give unto divine service, they can see and feel, and in their own imagination are sensibly excited unto devotion by them. But hereby, instead of representing the true glory of the worship of the Gospel, wherein it excels that under the Old Testament, they have rendred it altogether inglorious in comparison of it; for all the ceremonies and ornaments which they have invented for that end, come unspeakably short for beauty, order and glory, of what was appointed by God himself in the temple, scarce equalling what was among the pagans.

It will be said, that the things whereunto we assign the glory of this worship are spiritual and invisible. Now this is not that which is enquired after; but that whose beauty we may behold, and be affected with. And this may consist in the things which we decry, at least in some of them: though I must say, if there be glory in any of them, the more they are multiplied, the better it must needs be; but this is that which we plead, men being not able by the light of faith, to discern



cern the glory of things spiritual and invisible, do make images of them unto themselves, as Gods that may go before them, and these they are affected withal: but the worship of the Church is spiritual, and the glory of it is invisible unto eyes of flesh. So both our Saviour and the Apostles do testify in the celebration of it: *We come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel, Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.* The glory of this assembly, though certainly above that of organs, and pipes, and crucifixes, and vestments, yet doth not appear unto the sense or imaginations of men.

That which I design here, is to obviate the meretricious allurements of the Roman worship, and the pretences of its efficacy to excite devotion and veneration by its beauty and decency. The whole of it is but a deformed image of that glory which they cannot behold. To obtain and preserve in our hearts an experience of the power and efficacy of that worship of God which is in spirit and truth, as unto all the real ends of divine worship, is that alone which will secure us. Whilst we do retain right notions of the proper object of Gospelworship, and of our immediate approach by it thereunto, of the way and manner of that approach thro' the mediation of Christ, and assistance of the spirit; whilst we keep up faith and love unto their due exercise in it, wherein on our part the life of it doth consist, preserving an experience of the spiritual benefit and advantage which we receive thereby, we shall not easily be inveigled to relinquish them all, and give up our selves unto the embraces of this lifeless image.

3. It is an universal unimpeachable persuasion among all Christians, that there is a near intimate communion with Christ, and participation of him in the supper of the Lord.

He is no Christian who is otherwise minded. Hence from the beginning, this was always esteemed the principal mystery in the agenda of the Church, and that deservedly; for this persuasion is built on infallible divine testimonies. The communication of Christ herein, and our participation of him, are expressed in such a manner as to demonstrate them to be peculiar; such as are not to be obtained in any other way, or divine ordinance whatever; not in praying, not in preaching, not in any other exercise of faith on the word or promises. There is in it an eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ, with a spiritual incorporation thence ensuing, which are peculiar unto this ordinance. But, this especial and peculiar communion with Christ, and participation of him, is spiritual and mystical, by faith, not carnal or fleshly. To imagine any other participation of Christ in this life but by faith, is to overthrow the Gospel. To signify the real communication of himself and benefits of his mediation unto them that believe, whereby they should become the food of their souls, nourishing them unto eternal life, in the very beginning of his ministry, he himself expresseth it by eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, *John vi. 53. Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you.* But hereon many were offended, as supposing that he had intended an oral, carnal eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, and so would have taught them to be *Cannibals*. Wherefore to instruct his disciples aright in this mystery, he gives an eternal rule of the interpretation of such expressions, *v. 63. It is the spirit that quickneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* To look for any other communication of Christ or of his flesh and blood, but what is spiritual, is to contradict him in the interpretation which he gives of his own words. Wherefore this especial communion with Christ, and participation of him is by faith. If it were not, unbelievers ought all to partake of Christ as well as those that believe, which is a contradiction: for to believe in Christ, and to be made partakers of him, are one and the same. We must therefore find this peculiar participating of Christ in the special actings of faith, with respect unto the especial and peculiar exhibition of Christ unto us in this ordinance.

And these actings of faith are divers and many, but may be referred unto four heads.



(1.) It acts it self by obedience unto the authority of Christ in this institution. This is the foundation of all communion with Christ, or participation of him in any ordinance of divine worship whatever, that is peculiarly of his own sovereign appointment, and that in, and with such circumstances as unto the time, or season, and manner of it, as requires especial actings of faith with respect thereunto; for the institution of this ordinance was in the close of his ministry or prophetic office on the earth, and in the entrance of the exercise of his priestly office in offering himself a sacrifice unto God for the sins of the Church; between them both, and to render them both effectual unto us, he interposed an act of his kingly office in the institution of this ordinance. And it was in the same night wherein he was betrayed, when his holy heart was in the highest exercise of zeal for the glory of God, and compassion for the souls of sinners, faith hath herein an especial regard unto all these things. It doth not only act it self by a subjection of soul and conscience unto the authority of Christ in the institution, but respects also the exerting of his authority in the close of his prophetic, and entrance of the exercise of his sacerdotal office, on the earth; with all those other circumstances of it, which recommend it unto the souls and consciences of believers. This is peculiar unto this ordinance, and unto this way of the participation of Christ. And herein faith in its due exercise gives the soul an intimate converse with Christ.

(2.) There is in this divine ordinance, a peculiar representation of the love and grace of Christ in his death and sufferings, with the way and manner of our reconciliation unto God thereby. The principal design of the Gospel is to declare unto us the love and grace of Christ, and our reconciliation unto God by his blood. Howbeit herein there is such an eminent representation of them, as cannot be made by words alone. It is a spiritual image of Christ proposed unto us, intimately affecting our whole souls. These things, namely, the ineffable love and grace of Christ, the bitterness of his sufferings and death in our stead, the sacrifice that he offered by his blood unto God, with the effect of it in atonement and reconciliation, being herein contracted into one entire proposal unto our souls, faith is exercised thereon in a peculiar manner, and so as it is not in any divine ordinance or way of the proposal of the same things unto us. All these things are indeed distinctly, and in parts, set before us in the Scripture for our instruction and edification. But as the light which was first made and diffused unto the whole creation, did suffice to enlighten it in a general way, yet was far more useful, glorious and conspicuous, when it was reduced and contracted into the body of the sun: so the truths concerning Christ, as they are diffused through the Scripture, are sufficient for the illumination and instruction of the Church; but when by divine wisdom and institution they are contracted into this ordinance, their taste and efficacy is more eminent and communicative unto the eyes of our understandings, that is, our faith, than as merely proposed by parts and parcels in the word. Hereby faith leads the soul unto a peculiar communion with Christ, which is thereon made partaker of him in an especial manner.

(3.) Faith herein respects the peculiar way of the communication and exhibition of Christ unto us, by symbols, or sensible outward signs of bread and wine. It finds the divine wisdom and sovereignty of Christ in the choice of them, having no other foundation in reason or the light of nature; and the representation that is made herein of him, with the benefits of his death and oblation, is suited unto faith only, without any aid of sense or imagination: for although the symbols are visible, yet their relation unto the things signified, is not discernable unto any sense or reason. Had he chosen for this end an image or a crucifix, or any such actions as did by a kind of natural and sensible resemblance, shew forth his passion, and what he did and suffered, there had been no need of faith in this matter. And therefore as we shall see, such things are found out unto this end, by such as lost the use and exercise of faith herein. Besides, it is faith alone that apprehends the sacramental union that is between the outward signs and the things signified by virtue of divine institution: and hereby the one, that is, the body and blood of Christ, are really exhibited and communicated unto the souls of believers, as the outward signs are unto their bodily senses, the signs becoming thereby sacramentally unto us, what the things signified are in themselves, and are therefore called by



their names. Herein there is a peculiar exercise of faith, and a peculiar participation of Christ, such as are in no other ordinance whatever. Yea the actings of faith with respect unto the sacramental union and relation between the signs and things signified, by virtue of divine institution and promise, is the principal use and exercise of it herein.

(4.) There is a peculiar exercise of faith in the reception of Christ, as his body and blood are rendred and exhibited unto us in the outward signs of them; for though they do not contain carnally the flesh and blood of Christ in them, nor are turned into them, yet they really exhibit Christ unto them that believe in the participation of them; faith is the grace that makes the soul to receive Christ, and whereby it doth actually receive him. *To as many as received him, even unto them that believe in his name,* John i. 12. And it receives him according as he is propos'd and exhibited unto us in the declaration and promise of the Gospel, wherein he is propos'd; it receives him by the gracious assent of the mind unto this truth, the choice of him, cleaving and trusting unto him with the will, heart, and affection, for all the ends of his person and offices, as the mediator between God and man; and in the sacramental mysterious proposal of him, his body and blood, that is, in the efficacy of his death and sacrifice, in this ordinance of worship, faith acts the whole soul in the reception of him unto all the especial ends for which he is exhibited unto us, in this way and manner. What these ends are which give force and efficacy unto the actings of faith herein, this is not a proper place to declare.

I have mentioned these things, because it is the great plea of the Papists at this day, in behalf of their transubstantiation, that if we reject their oral or carnal manducation of the flesh of Christ, and drinking of his blood, there cannot be assigned a way of participation of Christ in the receiving of him in this sacrament, distinct from that which is done in the preaching of the word. But hereby, as we shall see, they only declare their ignorance of this heavenly mystery. But of this blessed intimate communion with Christ, and participation of him in the divine institution of worship, believers have experience unto their satisfaction and ineffable joy. They find him to be the spiritual food of their souls, by which they are nourished unto eternal life, by a spiritual incorporation with him. They discern the truth of this mystery, and have experience of its power. Howbeit men growing carnal, and being destitute of spiritual light, with the wisdom of faith, utterly lost all experience of any communion with Christ, and participation of him in this sacrament; on the principles of Gospeltruth, they could find nothing in it, no power, no efficacy, nothing that should answer the great and glorious things spoken of it, nor was it possible they should. For indeed there is nothing in it, but unto faith; as the light of the sun is nothing to them that have no eyes: a dog and a staff are of more use to a blindman, than the sun, nor is the most melodious musick any thing to them that are deaf; yet notwithstanding this loss of spiritual experience, they retained the notion of truth, that there must be a peculiar participation of Christ in this sacrament, distinct from all other ways and means of the same grace.

Here the wits of men were hard put to it to find out an image of this spiritual communion, whereof in their minds they could have no experience; yet they fashioned one by degrees, and after they had greatned the mystery in words and expressions (whereof they knew nothing in its power) to answer unto what was to be set up in the room of it, until they brought forth the horrid monster of transubstantiation, and the sacrifice of the mass; for hereby they provided that all those things which are spiritual in this communion, should be turned into, and acted in things carnal: bread shall be the body of Christ carnally, the mouth shall be faith, the teeth shall be the exercise, the belly shall be the heart, and the priest shall offer Christ unto God. A viler image never was invented; and there is nothing of faith required herein, it is all but a fortifying of imagination against all sense and reason. Because there is a singular mystery in the sacramental union that is between the external signs and the things signified, whence the one is called by the name of the other, as the bread is called the body of Christ, which faith discerns in the exhibition and receiving of it, they have invented for a representation hereof, such a prodigious imagination of the real conversion or transubstantiation of the substance of the bread and wine, into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, as overthrow's all faith, reason, and sense also. And in the room of that



holy reverence of Christ himself in his institution of this ordinance in the mystical exhibition of himself unto the souls of believers, in the demonstration of his love, grace and sufferings for them, they have set up a wretched image of an idolatrous adoration and worship of the host, as they call it, to the ruin of the souls of men. And whereas the Lord Jesus Christ, by once offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified, appointing this ordinance for the remembrance of it, having lost that spiritual light whereby they might discern the efficacy of that one offering so long since accomplished, in the application of it by this ordinance unto the actual perfecting of the Church; they have erected a new image of it, in a pretended daily repetition of the same sacrifice, wherein they profess to offer Christ again for the sins of the living and the dead, unto the overthrow of the principal foundation of faith and religion. All these abominations arose from the loss of an experience of that spiritual communion with Christ, and the participation of him by faith, which there is in this ordinance by divine institution. This cast the thoughts of men on invention of these images, to suit the general notion of truth unto the superstition of their carnal minds. Nor is it ordinarily possible to retrieve them from these infatuations, unless God be pleased to communicate unto them that spiritual light, whereby they may discern the glory of this heavenly mystery, and have an experience of the exhibition of Christ unto the souls of believers therein, without these; from innumerable prejudices, and inflamed affections towards their idols, they will not only abide in their darkness against all means of conviction, but endeavour the temporal and eternal destruction of all that are otherwise minded.

This image, like that of *Nebuchadnezzar*, was once set up in this nation, with a law, that *whoever would not bow down to it, and worship it, should be cast into the fiery furnace*. God grant it to be so no more, but if it should, there is no preservation against the influence of force and fires, but a real experience of an efficacious communication of Christ unto our souls in this holy ordinance, administered according to his appointment. This therefore is that we ought with all diligence to endeavour; and this not only as the only way and means of our edification in this ordinance, by an exercise in grace, the strengthening of our faith, and present consolation, but as the effectual means of our preservation in the profession of the truth, and our deliverance from the snares of our adversaries. For whereas it is undeniable, that this peculiar institution distinct from all other, doth intend and design a distinct communication and exhibition of Christ; if it be pressed on us, that these must be done by transubstantiation and oral manducation thereon, and can be no otherwise; nothing but an experience of the power and efficacy of the mystical communion with Christ in this ordinance, before described, will preserve us from being ensnared by their pretences. There is not therefore on all accounts of grace and truth, any one thing of more concernment unto believers, than the due exercise of spiritual light and faith, unto a satisfactory experience of a peculiar participation of Christ in this holy institution.

The same is fallen out amongst them with reference unto the Church, and all the principal concerns of it; having lost or renounced the things which belong unto its primitive constitution, they have erected a deformed image in their stead, as I shall manifest in some instances.

4. It is an unquestionable principle of truth, that the Church of Christ is in itself a body, such a body as hath an head, whereon it depends, and without which it would immediately be dissolved.

A body without an head is but a carcass, or part of a carcass, and this head must be always present with it. An head distant from the body, separated from it, not united unto it by such ways and means as are proper unto their nature, is of no use. See *Eph. iv. 15, 16. Col. ii. 19.*

But there is a double notion of an head, as there is of a body also; for they both of them are either natural or political. There is a natural body, and there is a political body; and in each sense it must have an head of the same kind. A natural body must have an head of vital influence, and a political body must have an head of rule and government. The Church is called a body, compared to it, is a body in both senses, or in both parts of the comparison, and in both must have an head. As it is a spiritual living body, compared to the natural, it must have an head of vital influence, without which it cannot subsist; and as it is an orderly society for the com-

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mon ends of its institution, compared unto a political body, it must have an head of rule and government, without which neither its being, nor its use can be preserved. But these are only distinct considerations of the Church, which is every way one and the same. It is not two bodies, for then it must have two heads; but it is one body under two distinct considerations, which divide not its essence, but declare its different respects unto its head.

And in general, all who are called Christians, are thus far agreed; nothing is of the Church, nothing belongs unto it, which is not dependant on, which is not united to the head. That which holds the head is the true Church; that which doth not so, is no Church at all. Herein we agree with our adversaries, namely, that all the privileges of the Church, all the right and title of men thereunto, depend wholly on their due relation to the head of it, according to the distinct considerations of it; be that head who or what it will, that which is not united unto the head, which depends not on it, which is separated from it, belongs not to the Church. This head of the Church is Christ Jesus alone; for the Church is but one, although on various considerations it be likened unto two sorts of bodies. The Catholick Church is considered either as believing, or as professing; but the believing Church is not one, and the professing another. If you suppose another Catholick Church, besides this one, whose will may be the head of it, we are not concerned therein; but unto this Church Christ is the only head: he only answers all the properties and ends of such an head to the Church. This the Scripture doth so positively and frequently affirm, without the least intimation, either directly, or by consequence of any other head, that it is wonderful how the imagination of it should befall the minds of any, who thought it not meet at the same time to cast away their bibles.

But whereas an head is to be present with the body, or it cannot subsist, the enquiry is, How the Lord Christ is so present with his Church? And the Scripture hath left no pretence for any hesitation herein; for he is so by his spirit and his word, by which he communicateth all the powers and virtues of an head unto it continually. His promises of this way and manner of his presence unto the Church, are multiplied, and thereon doth the being, life, use, and continuance of the Church depend; where Christ is not present by his spirit and word, there is no Church; and those who pretend so to be, are the synagogues of Satan, and they are inseparable and conjunct in their operation, as he is the head of influence unto the Church, as also, as he is an head of rule; for in the former sense the spirit worketh by the word, and in the latter, the word is made effectual by the spirit. But the sense and apprehension hereof, was for a long time lost in the world, amongst them that called themselves the Church. An head they did acknowledge the Church must always have, without which it cannot subsist; and they confess that in some sense he was an head of influence unto it; they knew not how to have an image thereof; though by many other pernicious doctrines, they overthrew the efficacy and benefit of it. But how he should be the only head of rule unto the Church they could not understand; they saw not how he could act the wisdom and authority of such an head, and without which the Church must be headless. They said, he was absent and invisible; they must have one that they could see, and have access unto; he is in heaven, and they know not how to make address to him, as occasion did require; all things would go to disorder, notwithstanding such an headship. The Church is visible, and it must, they thought, have a visible head. It was meet also, that this head should have some such grandeur and pomp in the world, as became the head of so great and glorious a society as the Church is. How to apply these things unto Christ and his presence with the Church, by his word and spirit, they knew not. Shall they then forego the principle, That the Church is to have such an head and supreme ruler? That must not be done, but be sacredly retained; not only because to deny it in general, is to renounce the Gospel; but because they had found out a way to turn it unto their own advantage; they would therefore make an image of Christ, as this head of the Church, to possess the place, and act all the powers of such an head; for the Church, they say, is visible, and must have a visible head: as though the Catholick Church, as such, were any other way visible, but as the head of it is, that is, by faith. That there must be an head and centre of union, wherein all the members of the Church may agree and be united; notwithstanding all their distinct capacities and circumstances, and how this should be Christ himself, they know not;



that without a supreme ruler present in the Church, to compose all differences, and determine all controversies, even those concerning himself, which they vainly pretend unto, they expressly affirm, that there never was a society so foolishly ordered as that of the Church. And hereon they conclude the insufficiency of Christ to be this sole head of the Church, another they must have for these ends. And this was their Pope, such an image as is one of the worst of idols that ever were in the world. Unto him they give all the titles of Christ, which relate unto the Church, and ascribe all the powers of Christ in and over it, as unto its rule, to him also. But here they fell into a mistake; for when they thought to give him the power of Christ, they gave him the power of the dragon to use against Christ, and those that are his. And when they thought to make an image of Christ, they made an image of the first beast, set up by the dragon, which had two horns like a lamb, but spake as a dragon, whose character and employ is at large described, *Rev. xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.*

This is the sum of what I shall offer on this head; those who called themselves the Church, had lost all spiritual light enabling them to discern the beauty and glory of the rule of Christ over the Church as its head; and hereon their minds became destitute of all experience of the power and efficacy of his spirit and word, continually to order the affairs thereof, in the ways, and through the use of means by himself appointed; they knew not how to acquiesce in these things, nor how the Church could be maintained by them: wherefore in this case, *They helped every one his neighbour, and every one said to his brother, Be of good comfort; so the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer, him that smiteth the anvil.* They set themselves in their several capacities, to frame this idol, and set him up in the place and stead of Christ, so fixing him in the temple of God, that he might shew himself from thence to be as God. Neither will this idol be ever cast out of the Church, until the generality of Christians become spiritually sensible of the authority of Christ, exerting itself in the rule of the Church, by his spirit and his word, unto all the ends of unity, order, peace, and edification; until that be done, a Pope, or something like him, will be thought necessary unto these ends. But never was there a more horrid deformed image made of so beautiful and glorious an head: all the craft of Satan, all the wits of men cannot invent any thing more unlike Christ, as the head of the Church, than this Pope is. A worse figure and representation of him cannot possibly be made.

This is he of whom, nothing not great, nothing common, nothing not exceeding the ordinary state of mankind, on the one hand, or the other, is thought or spoken. Some say, he is the head and husband of the Church, the vicar of Christ, over the whole world, God's vicegerent, a vice-god, *Peter's* successor, the head and center of unity unto the whole Catholick Church, endued with a plenitude of power, with other ascriptions of the same nature innumerable; whereon it is necessary unto every soul under pain of damnation, to be subject unto him. Others aver that he is anti-christ, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the beast that came out of the earth with two horns like a lamb, and a voice like the dragon, the false prophet, the idol shepherd, the evil servant that beareth his fellow servants, the adulterer of a meretricious and false Church; and there is no mean betwixt these; he is undoubtedly the one or the other. The Lord Jesus Christ, who hath determined this controversy already in his word, will ere long give it its ultimate issue in his own glorious person, and by the brightness of his coming. And this is an eminent idol in the *Chamber of Imagery* in the Roman Church. But at present it is evident wherein lies the preservation of believers from being inveigled to bow down to this image, and to worship it. A due sense of the sole authority of Christ in and over his Church, with an experience of the power of his word and spirit unto all the ends of its rule and order, will keep them unto the truth herein, and nothing else will so do. And if once they decline from this in any instances, seem they never so small, so as to admit of any thing in the Church, or its worship, which doth not derive immediately from his authority, they will be disposed to admit of another guide and head in all other things also.

5. Again, it is a notion of truth, that the Church of Christ is beautiful and glorious.



There are many prophecies and predictions concerning it, that so it should be; and there are sundry descriptions given of it as such. Its relation unto Christ, with his love unto it, and valuation of it, do require that it should be so glorious; yea his great design towards it, was to make it so to be, *Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.* This therefore all do agree in who profess Christian religion; but what that glory is, and wherein it doth consist, whence it is, and is said to be glorious, is not agreed upon. The Scripture indeed plainly declares this glory to be spiritual and internal, that it consists in its union unto Christ, his presence with it, the communication of his quickning spirit unto it, the cloathing of it with his righteousness, in its sanctification and purification from the defilement of sin, with its fruitfulness in obedience unto the praise of God. Add hereunto the celebration of divine worship in it, with its rule and order, according to the commandment of Christ, and we have the substance of this glory. And this glory believers do discern, so as to be satisfied with its excellency. They know that all the glories of the world are no way to be compared to it; for it consists in, and arises from such things as they do value and prefer infinitely above all that this world can afford. They are a reflexion of the glory of God, or of Christ himself upon the Church, yea a communication of it thereunto. This they value in the whole, and in every member of it, neither the nature, use, nor end of the Church will admit that its glory should consist in things of any other nature. But the generality of mankind had lost that spiritual light, wherein alone this glory might be discerned. They could see no form or beauty in the spouse of Christ, as only adorned with his graces. To talk of a glorious state of men, whilst they are poor and destitute, it may be clothed with rags, and haled unto prisons or stakes, as hath been the lot of the Church in most ages, was in their judgment a thing absurd and foolish. Wherefore seeing it is certain, that the Church of Christ is very glorious and illustrious, in the sight of God, holy angels, and good men, a way must be found out to make it so, and so to appear in the world. Wherefore they agreed on a lying image of this glory, namely, the dignity, promotion, wealth, dominion, power and splendor of them that had got the rule of the Church. And although it be evident unto all, that these things belong unto the glories of this world, which the glory of the Church is not only distinguished from, but opposed unto, yet it must be looked on as that wherein it is glorious; and it is so, though it have not one saving grace in it, as they expressly affirm. When these things are attained, then are all the predictions of its glory accomplished, and the description of it answered. This corrupt image of the true spiritual glory of the Church, arising from an ignorance of it, and want of a real experience of the worth and excellency of things internal, spiritual and heavenly, hath been attended with pernicious consequents in the world. Many have been infatuated by it, and enamoured of it, unto their own perdition. For as a teacher of lies; it is suited only to divert the minds of men from a comprehension and valuation of that real glory, wherein if they have not an interest they must perish for ever.

Look into foreign parts, as *Italy* and *France*, where these men pretend their Church is in its greatest glory, what is it, but the wealth, and pomp, and power of men, for the most part openly ambitious, sensual and worldly? Is this the glory of the Church of Christ? Do these things belong unto his kingdom? But by the setting up of this image, by the advancement of this notion, all the true glory of the Church hath been lost and despised. Yet these things being suited unto the designs of the carnal minds of men, and satisfactory unto all their lusts; having got this paint and gilding on them, that they render the Church of Christ glorious, have been the means of filling this world with darkness, blood and confusion. For this is that glory of the Church, which is contended for with rage and violence. And not a few, do yet dote on these images, who are not sharers in the advantage it brings unto its principal worshipers, whose infatuation is to be bewailed.

The means of our preservation from the adoration of these images also is obvious, from the principles we proceed upon. It will not be done, without light to discern the glory of things spiritual and invisible; wherein alone the Church is glorious. And in the light of faith they appear to be what indeed they are in themselves, of the same nature with the glory that is above. The present glory of the Church,



Church, I say, in its initiation into the glory of heaven, and in general of the same nature with it. Here it is in its dawns and entrances, there in its fulness and perfection. To look for any thing that should be cognate, or of near alliance unto the glory of heaven, or any near resemblance of it, in the outward glories of this world, is a fond imagination. And when the mind is enabled to discern the true beauty and glory of spiritual things, with their alliance unto that which is above, it will be secured from seeking after the glory of the Church in things of this world, or putting any value on them unto that end. That self denial also which is indispensably prescribed in the Gospel unto all the disciples of Christ, is requisite hereunto; for the power and practice of it, is utterly inconsistent with an apprehension, that secular power, riches and domination, do contribute any thing unto the Church's glory. The mind being hereby crucified unto a value and estimation of these things, it can never apprehend them as any part of that raiment of the Church wherein it is glorious. But where the minds of men through their native darkness, are disenabled to discern the glory of spiritual things, and through their carnal, unmortified affection, do cleave unto and have the highest esteem of worldly grandeur, it is no wonder, if they suppose the beauty and glory of the Church, to consist in them.

6. I shall add one instance more with reference unto the state of the Church, and that is in its rule and discipline.

Here also hath been as fatal a miscarriage as ever fell out in Christian religion. For the truth herein being lost, as unto any sense and experience of its efficacy or power, a bloody image destructive to the lives and souls of men was set up in the stead thereof. And this also shall be briefly declared. There are certain principles of truth, with respect hereunto, that are acknowledged by all; as,

(1.) That the Lord Christ hath appointed a rule and discipline in his Church, for its good and preservation; no society can subsist without the power and exercise of some rule in it self. For rule is nothing but the preservation of order, without which there is nothing but confusion. The Church is the most perfect society in the earth, as being united and compacted by the best and highest bonds, which our nature is capable of, *Eph. iv. 16. Col. ii. 19.* It must therefore have a rule and discipline in it self, which from the wisdom and authority of him, by whom it was instituted, must be supposed to be the most perfect.

(2.) That this discipline is powerful and effectual unto all its proper ends. It must be so esteemed from the wisdom of him by whom it is appointed, and it is so accordingly. To suppose that the Lord Christ should ordain a rule and discipline in his Church, that in it self and by its just administration, should not attain its ends, is to reflect the greatest dishonour upon him. Yea, if any Church or society of professed Christians, be fallen into that state and condition, wherein the discipline appointed by Christ cannot be effectual unto its proper ends, Christ hath forsaken that Church or society. Besides the holy Ghost affirms, that the ministry of the Church in the administration of it, is mighty through God, unto all its ends, *2 Cor. x. 4, 5.*

(3.) The ends of this discipline, are the order, peace, purity, and holiness of the Church, with a representation of the love, care and watchfulness of Christ over it, and a testimony unto his future judgment. An imagination of any other ends of it, hath been its ruin.

And thus far all who profess themselves Christians are agreed, at least in words. None dare deny any of these principles, no not to secure their abuse of them, which is the interest of many.

(4.) But unto them all we must also add, and that with the same uncontrollable evidence of truth, that the power and efficacy of this discipline which it hath from the institution of Christ, is spiritual only, and hath all its effects on the souls and consciences of those who profess subjection unto him, with respect unto the ends before mentioned. So the Apostle expressly describes it, *2 Cor. x. 4, 5. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing, that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, bringing into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ.* These are the ends, as of preaching of the Gospel, so of the discipline of the Church; and these are the ways and means of its efficacy: it



is spiritually mighty through God, unto all these ends, and others it hath none. But we shall immediately see the total reverse of this order, in an image substituted in the room of it.

(5.) Of the power and efficacy of this spiritual discipline unto its proper end, the primitive Christians, at least, had experience. For three hundred years, the Church had no other way or means for the preservation of its order, peace, purity, and holiness, but the spiritual efficacy of this discipline, on the souls and consciences of professed Christians. Neither did it fail therein, nor were the Churches any longer preserved in peace and purity, than whilst they had this discipline alone for their preservation, without the least contribution of assistance from secular power, or any thing that should operate on the outward concerns of mankind. And there can be no other reason given, why it should not be of the same use and efficacy still unto all Churches, but only the loss of all those internal graces, which are necessary to make any Gospel institution effectual; wherefore, all sense and experience hereof, of the spiritual power and efficacy of this discipline was utterly lost, amongst the most of them that are called Christians. Neither those who had assumed a pretence of the administration of it, nor those towards whom it was administered, could find any thing in it, that did affect the consciences of men, with respect unto its proper ends. They found it a thing altogether useless in the Church, wherein none of any sort would be concerned. What shall they now do? What course shall they take? Shall they renounce all those principles of truth concerning it, which we have laid down, and exclude it both name and thing out of the Church? This probably would have been the end of it, had they not found out a way to wrest the pretence of it unto their unspeakable advantage. Wherefore they contrived and made an horrid image of the holy, spiritual rule and discipline of the Gospel: an image it was, consisting in outward force and tyranny over the persons, liberties, and lives of men; exercised with weapons, mighty through the Devil to cast men into prison, and to destroy them. Hereby that which was appointed for the peace and edification of the Church, being lost, an engine was framed under its name and pretence unto its ruin and destruction; and so it continues unto this day. It had never entered into the hearts of men, to set up a discipline in the Church of Christ, by law, courts, fines, mulcts, imprisonments, and burnings, but that they had utterly lost in themselves, and suffered to be lost in others concerned, all experience of the power and efficacy of the discipline of Christ, towards the souls and consciences of men. But hereon they laid it aside, as an useless tool, that might do some service in the hands of the Apostles, and the primitive Churches, whilst there was spiritual life and sense left amongst Christians; but as unto them, and what they aimed at, it was of no use at all. The deformity of this image in the several parts of it, its universal dissimilitude unto that whose name it bears, and which it pretends to be, the several degrees whereby it was forged, framed, and erected, with the occasions and advantages taken, for its exaltation, would take up much time to declare: for it was subtilly interwoven with other abominations, in the whole mystery of iniquity, until it became the very life or animating principle of antichristianism. For however men may set light by the rule and discipline of Christ in his Church, and its spiritual power or efficacy towards the souls and consciences of men, the rejection of it, and the setting up of an horrid image of worldly power, domination, and force in the room of it, and under its name, is that which began, carried on, and yet maintains the fatal apostacy in the Church of *Rome*.

I shall instance only in one particular. On the change of this rule of Christ, and together with it, the setting up of *Mauzzim*, or an *image*, or *god of forces* in the stead of it; they were compelled to change all the ends of that discipline, and to make an image of them also. For this new instrument of outward force, was of no use with respect unto them; for they are as was declared, the spiritual peace, purity, love, and edification of the Church. Outward force is no way meet to attain any of these ends. Wherefore they must make an image of these also, or substitute some dead form in their room; and this was an universal subjection unto the Pope, according unto all the rules, orders, and canons which they should invent. Uniformity herein and canonical obedience, is all the end which they will allow unto their Church discipline; and these things hang well together, for nothing but outward force by law and penalties, is fit to attain this end. So was there an image composed and



erected of the holy discipline of Christ, and its blessed ends, consisting of these two parts, outward force, and feigned subjection. For hardly can an instance be given in the world, of any man who ever bowed down to this image, or submitted unto any ecclesiastical censure, out of a conscientious respect unto it. Force and fear rule all.

This is that discipline, in whose execution the blood of an innumerable company of holy martyrs hath been shed; that wherein all the vital spirits of the papacy do act themselves, and whereby it doth subsist, and although it be the image of jealousy, or the image of the first beast, set up by the dragon, yet it cannot be denied, but that it is very wisely accommodated unto the present state of the generality of them that are called Christians amongst them. For being both blind and carnal, and having thereby lost all sense and experience of the spiritual power of the rule of Christ in their consciences, they are become an herd not fit to be governed or ruled any other way. Under the bondage of it therefore they must abide, till the veil of blindness be taken away, and they are turned unto God by his word and spirit, for where the spirit of the Lord is, there, and there alone is liberty.

7. Unto the foregoing particular instances, with respect unto the Church, I shall yet add one more general, which is indeed comprehensive of them all; or the root from whence they spring; a root bearing gall and wormwood. And this is concerning the Catholick Church.

What belongs unto this Catholick Church, what is comprized in its communion, the Apostle declares, *Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. It is the recapitulation of all things in heaven and earth in Christ Jesus. Eph. i. 10. His body, his spouse, or bride, the Lamb's wife, the glorious temple, wherein God doth dwell by his spirit; an holy mystical society, purchased and purified by the blood of Christ, and united unto him by his spirit, or the inhabitation of the same spirit in him, and those whereof it doth consist. Hence they with him, as the body with its head, are mystically called Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12. And there are two parts of it, the one whereof is already perfected in heaven, as unto their spirits, and the other yet continued in the way of faith and obedience in this world. Both these constitute one family in heaven and earth, Ephes. iii. 15. in conjunction with the holy angels, one mystical body, one Catholick Church. And although there is a great difference in their present state and condition, between these two branches of the same family, yet are they both equally purchased by Christ, and united unto him as their head, having both of them effectually the same principle of the life of God in them. Of a third part of this Church, neither in heaven nor in earth, in a temporary state, participant somewhat of heaven, and somewhat of hell, called purgatory, the Scripture knoweth nothing at all, neither is it consistent with the analogy of faith, or the promises of God unto them that do believe, as we shall see immediately. This Church even as unto that part of it which is in this world, as it is adorned with all the graces of the holy spirit, is the most beautiful and glorious effect, next unto the forming and production of its head in the incarnation of the Son of God, which divine wisdom, power, and grace will extend themselves unto, here below: but these things, the glory of this state is visible only unto the eye of faith; yea, it is perfectly seen and known only to Christ himself. We see it obscurely in the light of faith and revelation, and are sensible of it, according unto our participating of the graces and privileges wherein it doth consist.*

But that spiritual light which is necessary to the discerning of this glory, was lost among those of whom we treat. They could see no reality nor beauty in these things, nor any thing that should be of advantage unto them. For upon their principle, of the utter uncertainty of mens spiritual estate and condition in this world, it is evident that they could have no satisfactory persuasion of any concernment in it. But they had possessed themselves of the notion of a Catholick Church, which with mysterious artifices they have turned unto their own incredible secular advantage. This is that whereof they boast, appropriating it unto themselves, and making it a pretence of destroying others, what lies in them both temporally and eternally. Unto this end they have formed the most deformed and detestable image of it that ever the world beheld: for the Catholick Church which they own, and which they boast that they are, instead of that of Christ, is a company or society of men, unto whom in order unto the constitution of that whole society, there is no one real christian grace required,

nor



nor spiritual union unto Christ the head, but only an outside profession of these things, as they expressly contend. A society united unto the Pope of Rome, as its head by a subjection unto him, and his rule according to the laws and canons whereby he will guide them. This is the formal reason and cause constituting that catholick Church which they are, which is compacted in it self by horrid bonds and ligaments, for the ends of ambition, worldly domination and avarice. A catholick Church openly wicked in the generality of its rulers, and them that are ruled; and in its state cruel, oppressive, and died with the blood of saints, and martyrs innumerable. This I say is that image of the holy catholick Church, the spouse of Christ, which they have set up. And it hath been as the image of *Moloch*, that hath devoured and consumed the children of the Church, whose cries, when their cruel stepmother pitied them not, and when their pretended ghostly fathers cast them into the flames, came up unto the ears of the Lord of hosts; and their blood still cries for vengeance on this idolatrous generation. Yet is this pretence of the catholick Church pressed in the minds of many, with so many sophistical artifices, through the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; proposed with the allurements of so many secular advantages, and imposed oft-times on Christians with so much force and cruelty, that nothing can secure us from the admission of it, unto the utter overthrow of religion, but the means before insisted on. A spiritual light is necessary hereunto, to discern the internal spiritual beauty and glory of the true catholick Church of Christ: where this is in its power, all the paintings and dresses of their deformed image will fall off from it, and its abominable filth will be made to appear. And this will be accompanied with an effectual experience of the glory and excellency of that grace in the souls of those that believe, derived from Christ the sole head of this Church, whereby they are changed from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord. The power, life, and sweetness hereof, will give satisfaction unto their souls, to the contempt of the pretended order, or dependance on the Pope as an head. By these means the true catholick Church, which is the body of Christ, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, growing up unto him in all things who is the head, despiseth this image, and dagon will fall to the ground when this ark is brought in, yea though it be in his own temple.

8. In the farther opening of this chamber of imagery, we shall yet, if it be possible, see greater abominations. At least that which doth next ensue, is scarce inferior unto any of them that went before. It is a principle in Christian religion, an acknowledged verity, that it is the duty of the disciples of Christ, especially as united in Churches, to propagate the faith of the Gospel, and to make the doctrine of it known unto all, as they have opportunity: yea, this is one principal end of the constitution of Churches and officers in them, *Matth. v. 13, 14, 15, 16. 1 Tim. iii. 15.*

This our Lord Jesus Christ gave in special charge unto his Apostles at the beginning, *Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15, 16.* Hereby they were obliged unto the work of propagating the faith of the Gospel, and the knowledge of him therein in all places, and were justified in their so doing. And this they did with that efficacy and success, that in a short time, like the light of the sun, *Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world, Rom. x. 18.* And the Gospel was said to be *preached unto every creature which is under heaven, Col. i. 23.* The way therefore, whereby they propagated the faith, was by diligent laborious preaching of the doctrine of the Gospel unto all persons in all places, with patience and magnanimity in undergoing all sorts of sufferings on the account of it, and a declaration of its power in all those virtues and graces, which are useful and exemplary unto mankind. It is true, their office, and the discharge of it, is long since ceased; howbeit it cannot be denied but that the work it self is incumbent in a way of duty on all Churches, yea on all believers, as they have providential calls unto it, and opportunities for it. For it is the principal way whereby they may glorify God, and benefit men in their chiefest good, which without doubt they are obliged unto.

This notion of truth is retained in the Church of Rome: and the work it self is appropriated by them, unto themselves alone. Unto them, and them only, as they suppose, it belongs to take care of the propagation of the faith of the Gospel, with



with the conversion of infidels and hereticks. Whatever is done unto this purpose by others, they condemn and abhor. What do they think of the primitive way of doing it, by personal preaching, sufferings and holiness? Will the Pope, his cardinals, and bishops, undertake this work or way of the discharge of it? Christ hath appointed no other, the Apostles and their successors knew no other, no other becomes the Gospel; nor ever had success. No, they abhor and detest this way of it. What then is to be done? Shall the truth be denied? Shall the work wholly and avowedly be laid aside? Neither will this please them, because it is not suited unto their honour; wherefore they have erected a dismal image of it unto the horrible reproach of Christian religion. They have indeed provided a double painting for the image which they have set up. The first is the constant consult of some persons at *Rome*, which they call *Congregatio de propaganda fide*, a council for the propagation of the faith, under the effect of whose consultations Christendom hath long groaned. And the other is, the sending of missionaries as they call them, or a surcharge of fryers from their over numerous fraternities upon their errands into remote nations.

But the real image it self consists of these three parts. (1.) The sword. (2.) The inquisitions. (3.) Plots and conspiracies.

By these, it is that they design to propagate the faith and promote Christian religion. And if hell it self can invent a more deformed image, and representation of the sacred truth and work, which it is a counterfeit of, I am much mistaken.

(1.) Thus have they in the first way, carried Christian religion into the *Indies*, especially the western parts of the world, so called. First the Pope out of the plenitude of his power, gives unto the *Spaniard* all those countries, and the inhabitants of them, that they may be made Christians. But Christ dealt not so with his Apostles, though he were Lord of all, when he sent them to teach and baptize all nations. He dispossessed none of them, of their temporal rights or enjoyments; nor gave to his Apostles a foot breadth of inheritance among them. But upon this grant, the *Spanish* Catholics propagated the faith, and brought in Christian religion amongst them. And they did it by killing and murdering many millions of innocent persons, as some of themselves say more than are alive in *Europe* in any one age. And this savage cruelty hath made the name of Christians detestable amongst all that remained of them, that had any exercise of reason; some few slavish brutes being brought by force to submit unto this new kind of idolatry. And this we must think to be done, in obedience unto that command of Christ, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.* This is the deformed image, which they have set up of obedience unto his holy commands, whereunto they apply that voice to *Peter* with respect unto the eating of all sorts of creatures, *Arise, Peter, kill and eat.* So have they dealt with those poor nations whom they have devoured. But blood, murder and unjust war (as all war is for the propagation of religion) with persecution, began in *Cain*, who derived it from the Devil, that murderer from the beginning; for he was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. Jesus Christ the Son of God was manifest to destroy these works of the devil, Heb. ii. And he doth it in this world by his word and doctrine, judging and condemning them. And he does it in his disciples by his spirit, extirpating them out of their minds, hearts, and ways; so as that there is not a more assured character of a derivation from the evil spirit, than force and blood in religion for the propagating of it.

(2.) The next part of this image, the next way used by them for the propagating of the faith, and the conversion of them they call hereticks, is the inquisition. So much hath been declared, and is known thereof, that it is needless here to give a portraiture of it. It may suffice, that it hath been long since opened like *Cacus's* den, and discovered to be the greatest arsenal of cruelty, the most dreadful shambles of blood and slaughter, that ever was in the world. This is that engine, which hath supplied the scarlet whore with the blood of saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, until she was drunk with it. And this is the second way, or means whereby they propagate the faith of the Gospel, and endeavour, as they say, the



the conversion of the souls of men. This is the second part of that image which they have set up instead of the holy appointment of Jesus Christ.

(3.) The third way they insist on unto this purpose, the third part of this image consists in plots and contrivances to murder princes, to embroil nations in blood, to stir up sedition unto their ruin, inveigling and alluring all sorts of vicious, indigent, ambitious persons, into an association with them, so to introduce the catholick religion in the places which they design to subvert. This engine for the propagation of the faith, hath been plied with various successes in many nations of *Europe*, and is still at work unto the same purpose. And hereunto belong all the arts which they use for the infatuation of the minds of princes and great men, all the baits they lay for others of all sorts to work them over unto a compliance with their designs.

Of these parts, I say, is that dreadful image made up and compos'd, which they set up, embrace and adore, in the room of the holy way for the propagation of the Gospel appointed by Jesus Christ. In his way they can see no beauty, they can expect no success; they cannot believe that ever the world will be converted by it, or be brought in subjection unto the Pope, and therefore betake themselves unto their own. Faith, prayer, holiness, preaching, suffering, all in expectation of the promised presence and assistance of Christ, are no ways for efficacy, success, and advantage, to be compared unto the sword, inquisition, and underhand designings. And this also is that which they call zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of Christ; another deformed image which they have brought into religion. For whereas that grace consists principally in postponing self, and all self-concerns, with an undervaluation of them, unto the glory of God, and the special duties whereby it may be promoted, this impious design to destroy mankind by all ways of subtilty, and cruelty, unto their own advantage, is set up in the room of it. But the consideration of the nature and spirit, of the use and end of the Gospel, of the design of Christ in it, and by it, is sufficient to preserve the souls of men not utterly infatuated, in an abhorrency of this image of its propagation. It is that wherein the God of this world, by the help of their blindness and lusts, hath put a cheat on mankind, and prevailed with them, under a pretence of doing Christ honour, to make the vilest representation of him to the world, that can be conceived. If he hath appointed this way for the propagating of the Gospel, he cannot well be distinguished from *Mahomet*: but there is nothing more contrary unto him, nothing that his holy soul doth more abhor. And had not men lost all spiritual sense of the nature and ends of the Gospel, they could never have given up themselves unto these abominations. For any to suppose that the faith of the Gospel is to be propagated by such cruelty and blood, by art and subtilty, by plots, conspiracies, and contrivances, any way but by the foolishness of preaching, which unto that end, is the power and wisdom of God, is to declare his own ignorance of it, and inconcernment in it. And had not men conceived and embraced another religion, than what is taught therein, or abused a pretence thereof unto ends and advantages of their own, this imagination of the propagation of it, had never taken place in their minds, it is so diametrically opposite unto the whole nature, and all the ends of it.

9. There is yet amongst them another image of a general principle, no less horrid than that beforementioned, and that with respect unto religious obedience. It is the great foundation of all religion, and in especial of Christian religion, that God in all things is to be obeyed absolutely and universally.

Of all our obedience, there is no other reason, but that it is his will, and is known unto us so to be. This follows necessarily from the infinite perfections of the divine nature. As the first essential verity he is to be believed in what he reveals above, and against all contradiction from pretended reasons, or any imaginations whatever; and as he is the only absolute independent being, essential goodness, and the sovereign Lord of all things, he is without farther reason, motive, or inducement, to be absolutely obeyed in all his commands. An instance whereof we have in *Abraham* offering his only son without dispute or hesitation, in compliance with a divine revelation and command.

It will seem very difficult to frame an image hereof amongst men, with whom there is not the least shadow of these divine perfections, namely, essential verity,



and absolute sovereignty, in conjunction with infinite wisdom and goodness, which alone renders such an obedience lawful, useful, or suitable unto the principles of our rational natures: but these of whom we speak, have not been wanting unto themselves herein, especially the principal craftsmen of this image trade. The order of the Jesuits have made a bold attempt for the framing of it. Their vow of blind obedience (as they call it) unto their superiors, whereto they resign the whole conduct of their souls, in all the concernments of religion, in all duties toward God and man, unto their guidance and disposal, is a cursed image of this absolute obedience unto the commands of God, which he requireth of us. Hence the founder of their order, was not ashamed in his epistle *ad fratres Lusitanos*, to urge and press this blind obedience from the example of *Abraham* yielding obedience unto God, without debate or consideration; as if the superiors of the order were good and not evil and sinful men. Whilst this honour was reserved unto God, whilst this was judged to be his prerogative alone, namely, that his commands are to be obeyed in all things, without reasonings and examinations as unto the matter, justice and equity of them, merely because they are his, which absolutely and infallibly conclude them good, holy and just, the righteous government of the world, and the security of men in all their rights, was safely provided for; for he neither will nor can command any thing but what is holy, just and good. But since the ascription of such a godlike authority unto man, as to secure blind obedience unto all their commands, innumerable evils, in murders, seditions and perjuries, have openly ensued thereon. But besides those particular evils in matter of fact, which have proceeded from this corrupt fountain, this persuasion at once takes away all grounds of peace and security from mankind; for who knows what a crew or sort of men, called the Jesuits superiors, known only by their restless ambition, and evil practices in the world, may command their vassals, who are sworn to execute whatever they command, without any consideration whether it be right or wrong, good or evil?

Let princes and other great men flatter themselves whilst they please, that on one consideration or other, they shall be the objects only of their kindness, if these men, according to their profession, be obliged in conscience to execute whatever their superiors shall command them, no less than *Abraham* was to sacrifice his son on the command of God; they hold their lives at the mercy, and on the good nature of these superiors, who are always safe out of the reach of revenge. It is marvellous that mankind doth not agree to demolish this cursed image, or the ascription of a godlike power unto men, to require blind obedience unto their commands, especially considering what effects it hath produced in the world. All men know by whose device it was first set up and erected; by whom, what means, and unto what end it was confirmed and consecrated; and at this day it is maintained by a society of men, of an uncertain extract and original, like that of the Janizaries in the *Turkish* empire, their rise being generally out of obscurity, among the meanest and lowest of the people. Such they are who by the rules of their education, are taught to renounce all respect unto their native countries, and alliances therein, but so as to make them only the way and matter for the advancement of the interest of this new society. And this sort of men being nourished from their very first entrance into the conduct of the society, unto hopes and expectations of wealth, honour, power, interest in the disposal of all publick affairs of mankind, and the regulation of the consciences of men, it is no wonder if with the utmost of their arts and industry, they endeavour to set up and preserve this image which they have erected, from whence they expect all the advantage which they do design. But hereof I may treat more fully, when I come to speak of the image of jealousy in self.

10. From these generals, I shall proceed unto more particular instances; and those for the most part in important principles of religion, wherein Christian faith and practice are most concerned. And I shall begin with that which is of signal advantage unto the framers of these images, as the other also are in their degree; for by this craft they have their livelihood and wealth, and most pernicious to the souls of other men. It is a principle of truth, and that such as wherein the whole course of Christian obedience is concerned, that there is a spiritual defilement in sin.



This the Scripture every where declares, representing the very nature of it by spiritual uncleanness. And this uncleanness is its contrariety unto the holiness of the divine nature, as represented unto us in the law. This defilement is in all men equally by nature; all are alike born in sin, and the pollution of it; who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? And it is in all personally, in various degrees; some are more polluted with actual sins than others, but all are so in their degree and measure. This pollution of sin must be purged and taken away before our entrance into heaven; for no unclean thing shall enter into the kingdom of God. Sin must be destroyed in its nature, practice, power and defects, or we are not saved from it. This purification of sin is wrought in us initially and gradually in this life, and accomplished in death, when the spirits of just men are made perfect. In a compliance with this work of God's grace towards them, whereby they purify themselves, consists one principal part of the obedience of believers in this world, and of the exercise of their faith. The principal, internal, immediate, efficient cause of this purification of sins, is the blood of Christ; the *blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, cleanseth us from all our sins*, 1 John i. 7. *The blood of Jesus purgeth our consciences from dead works*, Heb. ix. 14. *He washeth us in his own blood*, Rev. i. 5. And there is an external helping cause thereof, which is trials and afflictions, made effectual by the word, and accomplished in death.

But this way of purging sins by the blood of Christ, is mysterious: there is no discerning of its glory but by spiritual light, no experience of its power, but by faith. Hence it is despised and neglected by the most that yet outwardly profess the doctrine of the Gospel. Men generally think there are a thousand better ways for the purging of sin, than this by the blood of Christ, which they cannot understand; see *Micah* vi. 6, 7. It is mysterious in the application of it unto the souls and consciences of believers by the Holy Ghost; it is so in the spring of its efficacy, which is the oblation of it, for a propitiation, and in its relation unto the new covenant, which first it establisheth, and then makes effectual unto this end. The work of it is gradual and unperceptible unto any thing but the eyes of faith, and diligent spiritual experience.

Again, it is so ordered by divine wisdom, as strictly to require, to begin, excite, and encourage the utmost diligence of believers in a compliance with its efficacy unto the same end. What Christ did for us, he did without us, without our aid or concurrence. As God made us without ourselves, so Christ redeemed us; but what he doth in us, he doth also by us; what he works in a way of grace, we work in a way of duty: and our duty herein consists as in the continual exercise of all gracious habits, renewing, changing, and transforming the soul into the likeness of Christ (for he who hopes to see him, purifieth himself as he is pure) so also in universal, permanent, uninterrupted mortification unto the end, whereof we shall speak afterwards. This also renders the work both mysterious and difficult. The improvement of afflictions unto the same end, is a principal part of the wisdom of faith; without which they can be of no spiritual use unto the souls of men.

This notion of the defilement of sin, and that of the necessity of its purification, were retained in the Church of *Rome*; for they could not be lost, without not only a rejection of the Scripture, but the stifling of natural conceptions about them, which are indelibly fixed in the consciences of men. But spiritual light into the glory of the thing itself, or the mystical purification of sin, with an experience of the power and efficacy of the blood of Christ, as applied unto the consciences of believers unto that end, by the Holy Ghost, were lost amongst them. In vain shall we seek for any thing of this nature, either in their doctrine, or their practice. Wherefore having lost the substance of this truth, and all experience of its power, to retain the use of its name, they have made sundry little images of it, creeping things, whereunto they ascribe the power of purging sin; such as holy water, pilgrimages, disciplines, masses, and various commutations. But they quickly found by experience, that these things would neither purify the heart, nor pacify the consciences of sinners, any more than the blood of bulls and of goats could do it under the law; yea, any more than the lustrations and expiations of sin amongst the heathen could effect it. Wherefore they have at length formed a more stated and specious image of it, to serve all the turns of convinced sinners; and this is a purgatory after this life; that is, a subterraneous place, and various means where, and whereby the souls of men

are



are purged from all their sins, and made meet for heaven, when the Lord Christ thinks meet to send for them, or the Pope judges it fit to send them to him. Hereunto, let them pretend what they please, the people under their conduct do trust a thousand times more for the purging of their sins, than unto the blood of Christ: but it is only a cursed image of the virtue of it, set up to draw off the minds of poor sinners, from seeking an interest in a participation of the efficacy of that blood for that end, which is to be obtained by faith alone, *Rom. iii. 25*. Only they have placed this image behind the curtain of mortality, that the cheat of it might not be discovered; none who find themselves deceived by it, can come back to complain or warn others to take care of themselves; and it was in an especial manner suited unto their delusion, who lived in pleasures, or in the pursuit of unjust gain, without exercise of afflictions in this world. From these two sorts of persons, by this engine they raised a revenue unto themselves, beyond that of Kings or Princes; for all the endowments of their religious houses and societies, were but commutations for the abatement of the fire of this purgatory. But whereas in itself it was a rotten post, that could not stand or subsist, they were forced to prop it with many other imaginations; for unto this end to secure work for this purgatory, they coined the distinction of sin into mortal and venial; not as unto their end, with respect unto faith and repentance, nor as unto the degrees of sin with respect unto the aggravations, but as unto the nature of them; some of them being such, namely, those that are venial, as were capable of a purging expiation after this life, though men die without any repentance of them. And when this was done, they have cast almost all the sins that can be named under this order; and hereon this image is become an engine to disappoint the whole doctrine of the Gospel, and to precipitate secure sinners into eternal ruin. And to strengthen this deceiving security, they have added another invention of a certain storehouse of ecclesiastical merits, the keys whereof are committed to the Pope, to make application of them as he sees good unto the ease and relief of them that are in this purgatory. For whereas many of their Church and communion have, as they say, done more good works than were needful for their salvation (which they have received upon a due balance of commutative justice) the surplussage is committed to the Pope, to commute with it for the punishment of their sins, who are sent into purgatory to suffer for them, than which they could have found out no engine more powerful, to evacuate the efficacy of the blood of Christ, both as offered and as sprinkled, and therewith the doctrine of the Gospel concerning faith and repentance. Moreover, to give it farther countenance (as one lie must be thatched with another, or it will quickly rain through) they have fancied a separation to be made between guilt and punishment, so as that when the guilt is fully remitted and pardoned, yet there may punishment remain on the account of sin. For this is the case of them in purgatory, their sins are pardoned, so as that the guilt of them shall not bind them over to eternal damnation, though *the wages of sin is death*, yet they must be variously punished for the sins that are forgiven. But as this is contradictory in itself, it being utterly impossible there should be any punishment properly so called, but where there is guilt as the cause of it, so it is highly injurious both to the grace of God, and blood of Christ, in procuring and giving out such a lame pardon of sins, as should leave room for punishment next to that which is eternal. These are some of the rotten props which they have fixed on the minds of persons credulous and superstitious, terrified with guilt and darkness to support this tottering deformed image, set up in the room of the efficacy of the blood of Christ, to purge the souls and consciences of believers from sin. But that whereby it is principally established and kept up, is the darkness, ignorance, guilt, fear, terror of conscience, accompanied with a love of sin, that the most among them are subject and obnoxious unto, being disquieted, perplexed, and tormented with these things, and utterly ignorant of the true and only way of their removal and deliverance from them, they greedily embrace this sorry provision for their present ease and relief, being accommodated unto the utmost that human or diabolical craft can extend unto, to abate their fear, ease their torments, and to give security unto their superstitious minds. And hereby it is become to be the life and soul of their religion, diffusing itself into all the parts and concerns of it, more trusted unto than either God or Christ, or the Gospel.

Spiritual



Spiritual light and experience, with the consequents of them in peace with God, will safeguard the minds of believers from bowing down to this horrid image, though the acknowledgments of its divinity should be imposed on them with craft and force, otherwise it will not be done, for without this, there will a strong inclination and disposition, arising from a mixture of superstitious fear and love of sin, possess the minds of men to close with this pretended relief and satisfaction. The foundation of our preservation herein lies in spiritual light, or an ability of mind, from supernatural illumination, to discern the beauty, glory, and efficacy of the purging of our sins by the blood of Christ, when the glory of the wisdom and grace of God, of the love and grace of Christ, of the power of the Holy Ghost herein, is made manifest unto us, we shall despise all the paintings of this invention, *Dagon* will fall before the ark; and all these things do gloriously shine forth and manifest themselves unto believers in this mysterious way of purging all our sins by the blood of Christ. Hereon will ensue an experience of the efficacy of this heavenly truth in our own souls. There is no man whose heart and ways are cleansed by the blood of Christ, through the effectual application of it by the holy spirit, in the ordinance of the Gospel, but he hath or may have a refreshing experience of it in his own soul, and by the power which is communicated therewith, he is stirred up unto all that exercise of faith, and all those duties of obedience, whereby the work of purifying and cleansing the whole person may be carried on toward perfection, see 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. 1 *Thes.* v. 23. 1 *John* iii. 3. And he who is constantly engaged in that work with success, will see the folly and vanity of any other pretended way for the purging of sins here or hereafter. The consequent of these things, is peace with God, for they are assured pledges of our justification and acceptance with him, and being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and where this is attained by the Gospel, the whole fabrick of purgatory falls to the ground, for it is built on these foundations, that no assurance of the love of God, or of a justified state can be obtained in this life: for if it may be so, there can be no use of purgatory. This then will assuredly keep the souls of believers in a contempt of that which is nothing but a false relief for sinners, under disquietment of mind for want of peace with God.

II. Some other instances of the same abomination I shall yet mention, but with more brevity, and sundry others must at present be passed over without a discovery. It is the known method of Gospel faith and obedience, the way of God's dealing with believers in the covenant of grace, that after their initiation and implantation into Christ, they should labour to thrive and grow in grace, by its continual exercise, until they come to be strengthened and confirmed therein. And this in the ordinary way of God's dealing with the Church, they shall never fail of, unless it be through their own neglect: for there are many divine promises to this purpose, and it lies in the nature of the things themselves: for the seeds of grace are of that kind of habits, which will be increased and strengthened by exercise. Wherefore this confirmation in grace, is that whereof believers have a blessed experience.

This truth in general of an implantation into Christ, and the ensuing confirmation in grace, is universally assented unto, none can deny it, without denying the whole doctrine of the Gospel. But the sense and experience of it was lost amongst them of whom we treat; yet would they not forego the profession of the principle itself, which would have proclaimed them apostates from the grace of Christ: wherefore they formed an image of it, or images of both its distinct parts, which they could manage unto their own ends, and such as the carnal minds of men could readily comply with, and rest in. As in the other sacrament they turned the outward signs into the things signified; so in this of baptism, they make it to stand in the stead of the thing itself, which is to make it, if not an idol, yet an image of it. The outward participation of that ordinance with them is regeneration, and implantation into Christ, without any regard unto the internal grace that is signified thereby; so that which in itself is a sacred figure, is made an image to delude the souls of men.

And that which they would impose in the room of spiritual confirmation in grace, is yet more strange. The image which they set up hereof is episcopal imposition of hands. When one that hath been baptized can answer some few questions out of a catechism, tho' he be very ignorant, and openly vicious in his conversation, by this laying on of hands he is confirmed in grace.



It may be some will say, there is no great matter one way or other in things of this sort; they may be suffered to pass at what rate they will in this world. I confess I am not so minded. If there be any thing in them but mere formality and custom, if they are trusted unto as the things whose names they bear, they are pernicious unto the souls of men: for if all that are outwardly baptized, should thereon judge themselves implanted into Christ, without regard unto the internal washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; and all who have had this imposition of hands, should without more ado, suppose themselves confirmed in grace, they are in the ready way to eternal ruin.

12. It is granted among all Christians, that all our helps, our relief, our deliverance from sin, Satan, and the world, are from Christ alone.

This is included in all his relations unto the Church, in all his offices, and the discharge of them; and is the express doctrine of the Gospel. It is no less generally acknowledged, at least the Scripture is no less clear and positive in it, that we receive and derive all our supplies of relief from Christ by faith, other ways of the participation of any thing from him, the Scripture knoweth not. Wherefore it is our duty on all occasions to apply ourselves unto him by faith, for all supplies, reliefs, and deliverances: but these men can find no life nor power herein, at least if they grant that somewhat might be done this way, yet they know not how to do it, being ignorant of the life of faith, and the due exercise of it. They must have a way more ready and easy, exposed to the capacities and abilities of all sorts of persons good and bad, yea, that will serve the turn of the worst of men unto these ends. An image therefore must be set up for common use, instead of this spiritual application unto Christ for relief, and this is the making of the sign of the cross. Let a man but make the sign of the cross on his forehead, his breast, or the like, which he may as easily do as take up or cast away a straw, and there is no more required to engage Christ unto his assistance at any time. And the virtues which they ascribe hereunto are innumerable, but this also is an idol, a teacher of lies, invented and set up for no other end, but to satisfy the carnal minds of men, with a presumptuous supposition, in the neglect of the spiritually laborious exercise of faith; an experience of the work of faith in the derivation of all supplies of spiritual life, grace, and strength, with deliverance and supplies from Jesus Christ, will secure believers from giving heed unto this trifling deceit.

13. One thing more amongst many others of the same sort may be mentioned. It is a notion of truth which derives from the light of nature, That those who approach unto God in divine worship, should be careful that they be pure and clean, without any offensive defilements.

This the heathen themselves give testimony unto, and God confirmed it in the institutions of the law. But what are these defilements and pollutions which make us unfit to approach unto the presence of God, how and by what means we may be purified and cleansed from them, the Gospel alone declares. And it doth, in opposition unto all other ways and means of it, plainly reveal, that it is by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon our consciences, so to purge them from *dead works*, that we may serve the living God, see Heb. ix. 14. chap. x. 19, 20, 21. But this is a thing mysterious, nothing but spiritual light and saving faith can direct us herein. Men destitute of them could never attain an experience of purification in this way. Wherefore they retained the notion of truth itself, but made an image of it for their use, with a neglect of the thing itself. And this was the most ludicrous that could be imagined, namely, the sprinkling of themselves and others with that they call holy water, when they go into the places of sacred worship; which yet also they borrowed from the pagans; so stupid and foolish are the minds of men, so dark and ignorant of heavenly things, that they have suffered their souls to be deceived and ruined by such vain superstitious trifles.

This discourse hath already proceeded unto a greater length than was at first intended; and would be so much more, should we look into all parts of this chamber of imagery, and expose to view all the abominations in it. I shall therefore put a close unto it, in one or two instances, wherein the Church of *Rome* doth boast it self as retaining the truth and power of the Gospel in a peculiar manner, whereas in very deed they have destroyed them, and set up corrupt images of their own, in their stead.



14. The first of these is the doctrine and grace of mortification.

That this is not only an important evangelical duty, but also of indispensable necessity unto salvation, all who have any thing of Christian religion in themselves must acknowledge. It is also clearly determined in the Scripture, both what is the nature of it, with its causes, and in what acts and duties it doth consist. For it is frequently declared to be the crucifying of the body of sin with all the lusts thereof. For mortification must be the bringing of something to death; and this is sin, and the dying of sin consists in the casting out of all vicious habits and inclinations arising from the original depravation of nature; it is the weakning and graduate extirpation, or destruction of them, in their roots, principles, and operations: whereby the soul is set at liberty to act universally from the contrary principle of spiritual life and grace. The means on the part of Christ, whereby this is wrought and effected in believers, is the communication of his spirit unto them, to make an effectual application of the virtue of his death, unto the death of sin; for it is by his spirit that we mortify the deeds of the flesh, and the flesh it self, and that as we are implanted by him into the likeness of the death of Christ. By virtue thereof, we are crucified, and made dead unto sin; in the declaration of which things the Scripture doth abound. The means of it on the part of believers, is the exercise of faith in Christ, as crucified; whereby they derive virtue from him, for the crucifying of the body of death: and this exercise of faith is always accompanied with diligence and perseverance in all holy duties of prayer, with fasting, godly sorrow, daily renewed repentance, with a continual watch against all the advantages of sin. Herein consists principally that spiritual warfare and conflict that believers are called unto, this is all the killing work which the Gospel requires. That of killing other men for religion, is of a latter date, and another original. And there is nothing in the way of their obedience, wherein they have more experience of the necessity, power, and efficacy of the graces of the Gospel.

This principle of truth concerning the necessity of mortification is retained in the Church of *Rome*; yea, she pretends highly unto it, above any other Christian society. The mortification of their devotionists, is one of the principal arguments which they plead to draw unwary souls over unto their superstition. Yet in the height of their pretences unto it, they have lost all experience of its nature with the power and efficacy of the grace of Christ therein, and have therefore framed an image of it unto themselves. For,

(1.) They place the eminency and height of it in a monastical life, and pretended retirement from the world. But this may be, hath been, in all, or the most, without the least real work of mortification in their souls: for there is nothing required in the strictest rules of these monastick votaries, but may be complied withal, without the least effectual operation of the holy spirit in their minds, in the application of the virtue of the death of Christ unto them; besides, the whole course of life which they commend under this name, is neither appointed in, nor approved by the Gospel. And some of those who have been most renowned for their severities therein, were men of blood, promoting the cruel slaughter of multitudes of Christians upon the account of their profession of the Gospel, in whom there could be no one evangelical grace; for no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

(2.) The ways and means which they prescribe and use for the attaining of it, are such as are no way directed by the divine wisdom of Christ in the Scripture; such as multiplied confessions to priests, irregular ridiculous fastings, penances, self-macerations of the body, unlawful vows, self-devised rules of discipline, and habits, with the like trinkets innumerable. Hence whatever their design be, they may say of it in the issue, what *Aaron* said of his idol, *I cast the gold into the fire, and there came out this calf*; they have brought forth only an image of mortification, diverting the minds of men from seeking after that which is really and spiritually so. And under this pretence, they have formed a state and condition of life, that hath filled the world with all manner of sins and wickedness; and many of those who have attained unto some of the highest degrees of this mortification, on their principles, and by the means designed unto that end, have been made ready thereby for all sorts of wickedness.

Wherefore the mortification which they retain, and whereof they boast, is nothing but a wretched image of that, which is truly so, substituted in its room, and embraced



braced by such, as had never attained any experience of the nature or power of Gospel-grace in the real mortification of sin.

13. The same is to be said concerning good works; the second evangelica! duty whereof they boast.

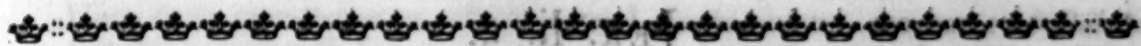
The necessity of these good works unto salvation, according unto mens opportunities and abilities, is acknowledged by all. And the glory of our profession in this world, consisteth in our abounding in them; but their principle, their nature, their motives, their use, their ends are declared and limited in the Scripture, whereby they are distinguished from what may seem materially the same, in those which may be wrought by unbelievers. In brief, they are the acts and duties of true believers only; and they are in them effects of divine grace, or the operation of the holy Ghost; for they *are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained, that they should walk in them.* But the principal mystery of their glory, which the Scripture insists upon, is, that although they are necessary, as a means unto the salvation of believers, yet are they utterly excluded from any influence unto the justification of sinners; so there was never any work evangelically good, performed by any, who were not before freely justified.

Unto these good works, those with whom we have to do, lay a vehement claim, as though they were the only patrons of them, and pleaders for them: but they have also excluded them out of Christian religion, and set up a deformed image of them, in defiance of God, of Christ, and the Gospel: for the works they plead for, are such, as so far proceed from their own free will, as to render them meritorious in the sight of God. They have confined them partly unto acts of superstitious devotion, partly unto those of charity, and principally unto those that are not so; such are the building of monasteries, nunneries, and such pretended religious houses, for the maintenance of swarms of monks and fryars, filling the world with superstition and debauchery. They make them meritorious, satisfactory, yea, some of them, which they call of supererrogation, above all that God requireth of us, and the causes of our justification before God. They ascribe unto them a condignity of the heavenly reward, making it of works, and so not of grace, with many other defiling imaginations; but whatever is done from these principles, and for these ends, is utterly foreign unto those good works which the Gospel enjoineeth, as a part of our new or evangelical obedience. But having, as in other cases, lost all sense and experience of the power and efficacy of the grace of Christ, in working believers unto this duty of obedience, unto the glory of God, and benefit of mankind, they have set up the image of them, in defiance of Christ, his grace, and his Gospel.

These are some of the abominations which are pourtrayed on the walls of the chamber of imagery in the Church of *Rome*; and more will be added in the consideration of the image of jealousy it self, which, God willing, shall ensue in another way. These are the shadows which they betake themselves unto, in the loss of spiritual light to discern the truth and glory of the mystery of the Gospel, and the want of an experience of their power and efficacy unto all the ends of the life of God, in their own minds and souls. And although they are all of them expressly condemned in the letter of the Scripture, which is sufficient to secure the minds of true believers from the admission of them, yet their establishment against all pleas, pretences, and force, for a compliance with them, depends on their experience of the power of every Gospel truth, unto its proper end, in communicating unto us the grace of God, and transforming our minds into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. †

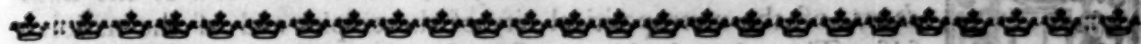
SER.





# \* SERMON XLV.

Seasonable Words for *English* Protestants.



To the Reader,



UPON the desire of some, interested in the publication of this sermon, I have perused it, and do communicate these my thoughts concerning it.

There appears unto me in it those two things, which do above all others commend any sermon, or any other book; namely, most weighty and seasonable argument, with very judicious and methodical management.

If I am able to judge, the management speaks, *Arma Virumque, The man and his furniture.* And it is like its great Author, well known to this age, and like to be so unto future ones, by his writings in more than one language. There is a favour due unto all posthumous pieces, of which sort this is; but there is little need that this piece seems to have of it.

As for its argument, it is very salvation; and that not merely personal, or domestical, but national. This, if any thing, will be acknowledged momentous; and now, if ever, it must be acknowledged seasonable. Now, in this our day, *known only to the Lord.* Nay now, that it is neither day nor night, as the prophet speaks. Now that city and country are crying, *Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?* Now, that the three frightful signs of approaching night are so upon us: I mean, *Shadows growing long, labourers going apace home, and wild beasts going boldly abroad. Quis talia fando temperet à lachrymis?*

In a word, here is that which will sufficiently recommend itself to all serious readers. It is the complaint of many, that our book-sellers shops are become heaps of dry sand, in which many a rich stone is lost. But it is known to all, that diamonds will be found out by their own lustre. And I make no great question but so this sermon will be. That it may be so, and may go much abroad, and do good wherever it comes, is the prayer of

From my House in Bridges Street, in  
Covent Garden, Aug. 7. 1690.

Thy Servant in Christ Jesus,

D. BURGESS.

\* This Sermon was preach'd at a Fast, Dec. 22, 1681.



## JER. li. 5.

*For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts, though their land was filled with sin against the holy One of Israel.*



**T**HIS Chapter, and the foregoing, are an eminent prophecy and prediction of the destruction of *Babylon*, and of the land of the *Chaldeans*, of the metropolitical city of the empire and of the nation it self. There is a double occasion for the inserting of these words. The first is to declare the grounds and reasons, why God would bring that destruction upon *Babylon*, and upon the land of the *Chaldeans*. The words of *ver. 4.* are; *The slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and they that are thrust through in her streets.* Why so? *For*, saith he, *Israel hath not been forsaken.* The reason why God will destroy the empire of *Babylon* is, because he will remember *Israel*, and what they have done against him. This lies in store for another *Babylon* in God's appointed time. The second reason is, that it may be for the comfort, for the supportment of *Israel* and *Judah*, under that distress which was then befalling them, upon the entrance of this *Babylon* in the land of the *Chaldeans*. Notwithstanding all, saith he, yet *Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah of his God.*

We are called this day to join our cries with the nation in the behalf of the land of our nativity. And tho' it hath been, as most of you know, my constant course on such solemn days as these are, to treat in particular about our own sins, our own decays, our own means of recovery; yet upon this occasion I shall, as God shall help me, from these words, represent unto you the state of the nation wherein we live, and the only way and means for our deliverance from universal destruction. To declare our interest herein, some things must be observed concerning this *Babylon*, whose destruction is so solemnly prophesied of in this, and the foregoing Chapter; and I must observe three things concerning it.

1. That *Babylon* was the original of apostacy from the natural worship of God unto idolatry in the whole world. There was great iniquity before the flood, but no mention of any idolatry. There was a natural worship of God throughout the world, that was not corrupted with idolatry. There is no mention of it until the building of *Babel*. There it began: the tower which they built, they turned into a temple of *Belus*, whom they had made a God, and laid his image in the top of it. There was the original. You shall see immediately how we are concerned. There was the original of apostacy from natural worship unto idolatry.

2. Their idolatry. The idolatry that there began, consisted in image worship, in the worshiping of graven images, which was their idolatry, that they set up with respect unto men departed, whom they worshiped by them. Four times in this prophecy doth God say, he will *take vengeance on their graven images*. And from *Isa. xl.* to the end of *xlvi.* you have a description of the idolatry of *Babylon*, that it all consisted in making carved idols, and graven images. The rest of the world, especially of the eastern nations, fell into the worshiping of the sun, which they called *Baal*, and *Moloch*, and *Kemoth*, all names of the sun; and the worship of the moon, which they called *Astarte*, and the queen of heaven; but the idolatry of *Babylon* was by graven images and idols.

3. They were, so far as appears upon record, the first state in the world, that ever persecuted for religion, that oppressed the true worshippers of God, as such, as being *mad upon their idols*, as the prophet saith they were, they were enflamed upon them. They were the first that oppressed the Church, because of its worshiping of God, and destroyed that worship among them. Hence the Church prays in this Chapter: *The vengeance of the Lord, and of his temple be upon Babylon*: not only the vengeance of the Lord, for destroying of his people; but the vengeance of his temple, for destroying of his worship, be upon *Babylon*, shall *Zion* say. *Others have afflicted*

me,



me, saith he in the same chapter, but this Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon hath broken my bones. They were the great oppressors of the Church.

Upon these three accounts, which is that I would observe, the name of *Babylon*, and all that is spoken of it in the Old Testament, is transferred to the apostate Church of *Rome* in the New, and all applied unto it in the book of the Revelation, and that upon this great analogy, which I shall now briefly shew.

Why doth God call the apostate state of the Church under the New Testament, *Babylon*, *Babylon*, the Mystery? For these three reasons.

(1.) As old *Babylon* was the rise and spring of apostacy from natural worship in the world unto idolatry, so this new *Babylon* was the rise and spring of apostacy from evangelical worship in the world unto idolatry. Mark the analogy. Hence she is called, *the mother of harlots*: that is, she that had brought forth all the idolatrous Churches and worship that were in the world. Did *Babylon* begin to apostatize into idolatry from natural worship? so *Rome* began to apostatize into idolatry from spiritual evangelical worship. Therefore the Holy Ghost calls her *Babylon*.

(2.) The peculiar idolatry of *Babylon* consisted in image worship, the worshiping of men departed under images made to their likenesses. And the peculiar idolatry of *Rome* consists in image worship, their worshiping saints departed, which is a great part of their idolatry. And therein they are *Babylon* also.

(3.) As *Babylon* was the spring of all persecution against, and oppression of the Church of God, under the Old Testament; so *Rome* hath been the spring of all persecution, and oppression of the Church of God since the apostacy, under the New Testament.

On these accounts hath the holy Ghost in infinite wisdom transferred over the name, and state, and other things spoken of *Babylon* from the old unto the new.

I have mentioned this, that you may see the interest of *England* in this text of Scripture. So far as the truth of religion is owned in this nation, so far as there is a testimony given against idolatry, we are to God as *Israel* and *Judah*, though the land be filled with sin. At the time of this prophecy *Israel* and *Judah* were in danger of present destruction and desolation from the old *Babylon*; and if we do not mock God in all we do, we are under apprehensions that *England* and the Church of God in *England*, is under danger of the same desolation and destruction from new *Babylon*, upon the same account and principle. If we do not mock God, this is that we profess at this day. Wherefore the parallel runs thus far equal. Such as was *Babylon* of old, such is that at present: such as was the danger of *Israel* and *Judah* from them at that day, such is the danger of *England* from the new at this present. This is spoken in general.

For the opening of the words observe these three things.

First, That there is in them a reduplication of the names or titles of God. He in this verse called by the name of *the Lord of Hosts*, and by the name of *the holy One of Israel*. Where there are such reduplications of the name of God, or any of his titles, the holy Ghost would have us take notice, that it is a matter of great importance whereof he speaks.

Secondly, There is a distribution and application of these names of God unto distinct occasions suitable unto them.

1. There is in it mentioned an intimation of a surprisal with some protection or deliverance. Who shall it be done by? *The Lord of hosts*, saith he, *the Lord his God*. And he doth not in vain add immediately, *The Lord of hosts*, that title of God. He who hath the host above, and the host below in his sovereign disposal. God's host above are all the holy angels, and all the heavenly bodies in their influences. The stars in their courses fought against *Sisera*. And he hath lately hung forth among us a flag or ensign of his host above, intimating that he is arising in his indignation, as *the Lord of hosts*, and hath hung forth an ensign before his coming, full of dread and terror. And he is *the Lord of hosts* here below, of all men, and of all creatures, disposing of them as seems good unto him. The prophet adds this name of God, because of the unspeakable greatness of the thing he mentions, namely, that *Israel* should not be forsaken, nor *Judah*, while the land was so filled with sin, and the whole interest of *Babylon* so coming upon them.

2. The



2. The other title of God is, *The holy One of Israel*. This is applied peculiarly unto their sin: *The land is filled with sin against the holy One of Israel*. It is the greatest, it is the highest aggravation of sin, that it is against the holiness of God, *who is a God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*. So hath the wisdom of the holy Ghost applied these two distinct titles of God unto the two distinct considerations of the people; first, of their protection, that he is the Lord of hosts; secondly, as of their sin, that he is the holy One of Israel.

Thirdly, The third thing is this: that in this woful state there is yet an intimation made of a covenant interest of Judah in God, and that God did yet own them as his in covenant. *Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God*. Brethren, no man, I think, hath less of faith than I; no man doth more despond. But if I could see these two things in concurrence, *his God, and the Lord of hosts*, that is, sovereign grace, according to his covenant; and sovereign power, according to his providence, there is ground for any man's faith to build upon: *his God, the Lord of hosts*. Nothing but sovereign grace and sovereign power can preserve a people, when their land is full of sin against the holy One of Israel, and destruction seems to encompass them from the interest of Babylon.

I shall speak yet a little more particularly. You may consider in the words:

1. That which is mentioned in the last place: the state of the people at this time: *Their land was filled with sin against the holy One of Israel*.

2. An intimation of approaching deserved destruction on that account: *Though the land*: it is in that condition that it ought to look for nothing but destruction.

3. A strange and wonderful surprisal, notwithstanding this, in sovereign grace and power: *Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God the Lord of hosts*.

What shall I speak to is this.

Observat. *When a land is filled with sin against the Lord, let mens hopes and expectations be what they will, they are in danger of utter destruction, and cannot be saved, but by the actings of sovereign grace and power*.

I shall, for the handling hereof, at least I design to do these three things.

I. Shew when a land is filled with sin against the holy One of Israel.

II. Gather up what evidences we have, that *England* is not yet utterly forsaken of God.

III. Manifest what is indispensibly required of us, that we may not be given up unto that utter desolation and destruction, that lieth at the door.

I do believe that I am not in my thoughts far from your case, far from the case of the nation. I do not search for things to speak to, I shall speak only those, that are compliant with the common reason and understanding of all sober persons.

I. There are three ways whereby a land may be said to be filled with sin.

1. When the sins of a land or nation are come to the full, to the utmost measure that God hath allotted to them in his patience. There is such an allotment of patience to every nation under heaven, and when it comes to its appointed issue, no means under heaven can defer or delay their destruction one day. Thus saith God before the flood: *The land is filled with sin, the whole earth with violence; a flood shall take them away*, the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah came up to God; they had filled up their measure; God sent fire and brimstone to destroy them. *You shall not yet go into Canaan*. Why? *The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full*. There is a time appointed, wherein the iniquity of the Amorites shall come up to its full measure, beyond which their destruction shall not be delayed. This was not now the case of *Israel and Judah*. It proved afterward to be their case, as the Apostle describes it, *1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and they please not God, and are contrary unto all men, forbidding us to preach to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway. For the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost*. How come? They have filled their measure, reach'd to their bounds; *Wrath is come upon them to the uttermost*. I hope, I pray that this is not, that this may not be the state of *England*; that our land is not so filled with sin, as that God's decree of absolute and universal desolation should be gone forth against us.



2. A land may be said to be filled with sin, when it is come to that degree and measure, as that God will not pass it by without some severe desolating judgment. He will not utterly forsake it, he will not utterly destroy it; but let all mankind do what they will, he will not pass it by without some severe desolating judgment. Such was their case even at this time. You may see in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. *But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy:* It was impossible that the judgment of God should be turned away from them. In this state God saith: *Pray not for this people; my heart shall not be towards them:* until he had brought his judgment upon them. *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, I will not hear them.* Ay, but what if reformation come in? Nay, nay, saith he, it is determined against them: reformation shall not save them. See 2 Kings xxiii. 25, 26. where there is an account given of the greatest reformation that ever was wrought in Judah, by Josiah. So it is said: *Like unto him there was no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him:* having reformed the whole nation. Then sure all will be well. See the next words: *notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah; and the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight.* There is a time and season when God, although he will not utterly destroy and forsake a nation for ever, yet he will not pass them by; until he hath brought a severe destructive scourge upon them. Whether this be the state of *England* at this day, or no, God only knows, and of mankind not one. Whether we are come to that state, wherein there is no remedy, wherein nothing we do shall prevent desolating judgments, I say, God only knows, and of men not one.

3. A land is filled with sin, when it is come to such a degree and measure, as that there is no rule of the word, nor any prognostick from providence, nor any conjecture from the state of things, that can give any determination what will be the issue. Judgment is deserved, and there is nothing remains but to look upon the balance, as it is held in the hand of sovereignty; which way it will turn, God only knows. The decree is not yet gone forth. In this your state God doth not say: *Pray not for this people:* God doth not say: *Though you reform, I will not turn from the fierceness of my wrath:* but God saith: *Who knows if God will return and leave a blessing? Who knows if God will be entreated and have mercy?* He leaves it upon the absolute pleasure of sovereignty to give us encouragement to wait upon him. Because I take this, yea and I take it in the best of my hopes, to be that wherein we are concerned, pray take these two things along with you, before I go to shew it in particular. The first is, that in this state, if God gives time and space, there is encouragement enough left to make our applications to him for the removal of impending judgments. Methinks sometimes I see by faith the Lord high lift up upon his throne, and his train filling the temple with his glory, and holding the balance of this nation in his hand, and can turn it to mercy or judgment as seems good unto him. While it is so, while though *the woman be put into the epha, yet the talent of lead is not laid upon her*, there is time for intercession, yet time for the interposition of God. And secondly, I say, and do you take it as you see good, but I will tell you my persuasion, that if there be not a compliance with the calls of God unto this nation, upon this suspension and arrest of judgment that we are under, we shall as certainly perish, as if we were in either of the two former conditions. If the *Chaldeans* were all wounded men, if there was no hope, no strength, no relief in the papal cause, they shall rise up and smite as in the day wherein *Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel, and the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children*, Hof. x. 14. Unless there be a compliance with the calls of God in the days wherein we live.

Let us then a little, as God will give strength, enquire when a nation is so filled with sin against the holy One of *Israel*, as certainly to put the balance into the hands of sovereignty, and to take off all rules and prognosticks (which with great grief I have heard sometimes insisted upon) and reduce us merely to the hand of sovereignty. When is it that a land is so filled with sin?



(1.) A land is so filled with sin, when all sorts of provoking sins do abound in it; when there is no exception to be put into the indictment; when there is no provoking sin that can be thought on, that is not in the nation. For if there be but one provoking sin absolutely excluded, there is room for mercy to dwell. Who now shall plead for *England*? Who shall put in an exception for *England* into this indictment? Oh poor *England*, among all thy lovers, thou hast not one to plead for thee this day! From the height of profaneness and atheism through the filthiness of sensuality and uncleanness, down to the lowest oppression and cheating, the land is filled with all sorts of sin. If there be any that can put in an exception, as to any provoking sin that is not among us, let them stand forth and plead the cause of this nation. I profess my mouth is stopped. *The land is filled with sin against the holy One of Israel.* It is to no purpose to enumerate our sins; the roll is too long to be read at this time; and I am sorry it hath been cut, and thrown into the fire; when it hath been spoken of, contemned and despised, as *Jeremiah's* was by *Jehoiakim*. But so it is.

(2.) A land is so filled with sin against the holy One of *Israel*, when all sorts of persons in a land are guilty of provoking sins. Pray mistake me not; I do not say, all persons of all sorts: God forbid. If it had been so, we had long since been like unto *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*. *If the Lord of hosts had not left us a small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrhah, Isai. i. 9.* But whereas there are many sorts of persons, rulers, and them that are ruled; high and low, rich and poor; in court, in city, in country; I say, all sorts of persons have been guilty of these provoking sins: *We, and our princes*, as *Daniel* speaks, and our rulers, and the people, the inhabitants of the land of all sorts. Who shall plead here for *England*? Who shall bring forth a sort of persons? nay, it is not so in the throne; nay, it is not so at court; nay, it is not so among the clergy; nay, it is not so in the city; nay, it is not so in the country; it is not so with the rich; it is not so with the poor. Let any one, that can, bring in a plea for this poor nation, that we may not conclude the land is filled with sin against the holy One of *Israel*.

But you will say: Here lies an exception: there are many persons, many Churches free from these flagitious and provoking sins: there is a sort of persons, Churches, and professors, who walk in the fear of God, and are free from all these sins: and therefore it doth not extend to all sorts.

Brethren, you know my mind full well in this matter. I have been for these three last years upon all occasions inculcating it upon you. I acknowledge the Churches in this nation are not guilty of those sins, whereby God is provoked against the nation to bring on national judgments: but I do say, that Churches and professors in this nation are guilty of those sins, for which Christ will bring correcting judgments upon Churches and professors; so that we are all in the same way and bottom, though not all upon the same account: *The land is filled with sin.* How are your thoughts concerned in these things, brethren? I confess to you I speak my heart, my conscience, as in the presence of God, and as that which you are concerned to consider.

I have given you two evidences that this land is so filled with sin against the holy One of *Israel*. I will give you two more.

(3.) When the sins of a land have upon them the greatest aggravations that national sins are capable of. What are they? They are plain: they are against warnings, and against mercies: all sorts of sins in all sorts of persons, against all sorts of warnings, and against all sorts of mercies. God hath not left this land without warnings in heaven above, and in earth beneath. Was there no warning given us in the wasting, desolating plague? No warning in the consuming, raging fire? No warning in the bloody war that ensued thereon? No warning in all the prodigious appearances in heaven above, that we have had? None in that which at present hangs over us, as an ensign of God's supernal host? I acknowledge there hath been, I fear a weakness in one kind of warning by the publick dispensation of the word. But God hath not left himself without witness: he hath multiplied warnings, and they have not been complied withal. Have they, brethren? *Were they at all afraid*, saith *Jeremiah*, when the roll was read? Or, *did they rent their cloaths*? *Jer. xxxvi. 24.* No, not at all. Have these warnings of God been

complied



complied withal? Hath the voice of God in them been heard? Hath the nation been afraid? Have they rent their cloaths and returned to the Lord? They have not. We yet continue, God help us, in a state of sin against warnings. And as for mercies, the mercies of peace and plenty have been the food of lust, of covetousness and sensuality, and have pampered us in wantonness, to the rending and tearing one another.

(4.) When in the secret workings of God's providence there is an inclination in a sinful people unto a compliance with them, from whom their destruction is like to proceed; it is a sign that God is withdrawn from them, and that the land is so filled with sin. When *Israel* was to be destroyed by the *Assyrian*, when *Israel* saw his sickness, he sent to the king of *Assyria*, applied himself to the king of *Assyria*, by whom he was to be destroyed, *Hof. v. 13.* When *Judah* saw his sickness, all his inclinations and applications were unto the *Babylonians* and *Chaldeans*, by whom he was to be destroyed. The prophet *Ezekiel* hath a whole chapter to tell you of the fondness of that people upon the *Babylonians* before their destruction, *Ezek. xxiii.* *They were all like princes and mighty men, and thou wast in love with them, and committed adultery with them:* that is, partook and complied with their idolatry. When it is so, it is evident that God is greatly withdrawn from such a people, and that they are nigh unto their desolation.

What shall we plead for *England* in this matter? Is it not known what wretched and vile compliances we have had with a neighbour nation, the *French*, following their manners, imitating their customs, promoting their interest, advancing their reputation, when every man almost among us talked of nothing but that we should be destroyed by the *French*? An eminent token of the hand of God upon us, and that the land is so filled with sin against the holy One of *Israel*. Nay, go farther, whence is it (for we bear our selves herein not only upon the truth of the thing it self, but also upon the proclamation inviting us upon this day) whence is it that we fear the judgments of God? Whence do we fear desolation, confusion, destruction upon this nation, to our religion, to our liberties, to our lives? Is it not from the papal interest? There is it stated by our rulers, and in the thoughts of all sober persons. And had we been wise, we might have seen it many years ago. But what have we been doing for some ages? Deserting our principles, forsaking the foundation we stood upon against the papacy, foregoing those avowed principles of the first reformers, pleading for compliance, pleading for a possibility of reconciliation, avowing them to be a true Church. And in one word, if the power of the Protestant religion had not been preserved in the body of the people, it had by some been long ago given up to the papal interest, and this at a time working effectually among us when we were in dread, all that were wise and considerative, that there would from thence arise the desolation and destruction of this Church.

I have given you these evidences, that this land of ours is so filled with sin against the holy One of *Israel*. And if they can answer it, and disprove it, no man shall more rejoice in it than my self.

I should in the next place shew the danger that land is in, when things lie in this equal balance. For I pray observe, I have not given these things to prove the land hath filled up its measure of iniquity, and must certainly be destroyed; I have not given them to prove absolutely that there is a decreed judgment that cannot be diverted, that there is no remedy, that notwithstanding reformation, God will say: *I will not turn away the fierceness of mine anger:* but I have given them only to prove, that we are in that state and condition, wherein there is no certain rule of the word, no indication of providence, no rational consideration of the state of things, that can give us any security of protection, or deliverance; but that we are absolutely resolved upon sovereign grace and mercy, and without relief from thence, I shall only say, as to the proof of the proposition, what the prophet saith, *Isai. xxxiv. 16.* *Seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read, not one of these things shall fail.*

To omit all the considerations, and all the proof I intended, that sovereign grace and mercy must be our relief, if ever we be relieved; I proceed unto the second thing, which is,



II. To give in evidences, that *England* is not yet utterly forsaken of the Lord its God, the Lord of hosts, though the land be thus filled with sin.

So that there is ground of encouragement yet remaining to apply our selves to God. And in truth I will tell you the best I can think of.

1. The large and wonderful discovery of the horrible plot, of the horrible popish plot, laid for the ruin, destruction and desolation of this nation, is an evidence that *England* is not yet, I say, utterly forsaken of the Lord its God. It was not discovered by our rulers, from whom it was hid. It was not discovered by the severe indagation and watchfulness of ministers of state from foreign intelligence, the usual way of discovering such plots. It was not discovered by persons of authority and interest, to warrant the discovery. It was not so in a time when the nation was awake, and looked about them, and were jealous of such things; but in the deepest security. It hath admitted, it hath met with all the endeavours of hell and men for the covering of it; yet through the conduct of the holy providence of God it hath broke forth to that discovery, as that it is publicly proclaimed to all the nation. I say with the wife of *Manoah*: *If God would have destroyed us, he would not have shewed us this thing.* If he had utterly forsaken us, he would have left us to have been swallowed up, when we should not have had leisure to have cried, alas! To me, I say, it is an evidence that *England* is not yet utterly forsaken.

2. That God hath stirred up some, at least, of the nobles, and our rulers, to follow on this discovery, to bring it forth to light, and to pursue them to condign punishment, who were the contrivers, authors, abettors, and carriers on of that bloody design. I will not speak one word or syllable to their dishonour or disrespect, who deserve both honour and respect from us: but this I will say, that if I know them, or any thing of them, this is not from themselves; this is from the cloathing of the spirit of God, and anointing to this very work, and is not from themselves, nor their own principles, nor their own inclinations, but the hand of God in them and upon them. Add hereunto the strange and wonderful quiet disposure of the magistracy of this city into the hand of persons, prudent, diligent and watchful, whom we have reason to pray for, and blefs God for. And it is strengthened by the stirring up of a spirit in the common people, unto an unheard of heat and earnestness in bearing witness and testimony against popery and all their abominations, in such a manner as hath not fallen out in any nation under heaven, and this acted above and beyond their spirits and principles. These things to me are some evidences, that *England* is not yet utterly forsaken of the Lord its God, though the land be full of sin.

3. I could instance in the embroilments of foreign nations abroad. At this time they are all quiet, but who is there that doth not know that they all stand as it were on the tiptoe, looking who shall first begin to cut throats, and kill men? Even all the nations in *Europe* are in this posture at this day. Though they are quiet this cold weather, yet who shall begin first, who shall make the attack, and who shall defend, is the talk of all *Europe*, whereby some of them may have been hindered from a publick contributing to the ruin of this poor nation.

4. It is an evidence that *England* is not yet forsaken, in that a secret, efficacious influence of divine providence hath preserved the body politick of the nation in its being and union, when all the ligaments of law and mutual trust have been broken. There hath been such a dissolution of mutual trust, and all ordinary ligaments of the politick union of a nation, that if God had not powerfully grasped the whole in his hand, we had long since been in confusion, and every man's sword had been in the side of his brother and his neighbour. But to this day we are preserved in peace by a secret, influential power of divine wisdom and providence, whose footsteps I would adore more and more; which is so much the more excellent, in that it is not visible, and by outward force, but merely upon the minds of men. This is to me another evidence that *England* is not yet forsaken of its God, the Lord of hosts.

5. My last is this: that after God hath by so many ways, and so many means, declared unto us his displeasure against our sin, having declared the sentence in his word, yet he hath visibly granted an arrest of judgment. The sentence shall not be put in execution, saith God, while I give this people a time, and space, and

season



season of repentance and reformation. Alas! If God had utterly forsaken us, he would have taken us off in the midst of our security; evil would have risen, and we should have known the morning of it; destruction would presently have overtaken us. But now God hath given us various calls, various warnings, and leaves us a space as yet, to see what we will do, and what will become of us. I will give them a trial, saith God, the decree shall not yet go forth, judgment shall not yet come forth to execution, I will give them a space for repentance. And this consideration hath a double corroboration of this blessed space and season God hath given us for to apply ourselves so far to his call, as to remove his judgments that are impending over us.

(1.) The first is, That he hath reserved a remnant among us, that do make use of this space and season to apply themselves unto the throne of grace, and to cry mightily for mercy. God hath not taken his holy spirit from us. God hath not said by any open work, or secret intimation of providence: *Pray no more for this people; my heart shall not be toward them.* He hath not said so. And therefore there are yet among us precious souls, who do lift up prayers to God night and day, not only for themselves and families, not only for the Church of God, but for this poor land of our nativity, that, if it were the will of God, we may not see it soaked in blood; that God would not come forth to destroy it with a curse; that God would pity, and spare, and have mercy upon it; that he would not make it an *Aceldama*, a field of blood. There are many cries to God to this purpose. So that there are some, by whom this space and season God hath given us, is made use of.

(2.) It hath strength from this, That there is an invitation and encouragement given to the whole nation, to join together in their cries to God this day for the same end and purpose. I confess to you, give me leave to speak it, I am afraid the body of the nation, considering their conduct in this sort of duty, will make no great work of it, towards the averting of judgments in such a day as this is. And I am afraid also, that the approaching carnival, or time of feasting, will quickly blot out all impressions that ought to be in the minds of men from such a day as this is. This is all I can say, God is publicly acknowledged, and what influence that may have in a farther suspension of judgment, till the nation be better prepared to seek unto him, I know not.

Methinks these are evidences (to me they are) that *England* is not yet utterly forsaken of the Lord its God: The miraculous discovery of the plot for our destruction: The pursuit of it by some of our rulers, and the body of the nation: The embroilment of foreign nations in their own concerns: The preservation of the political interest and body, when all the ligaments of law, and love, and trust were dissolved: The space and season that God gives us, that we are not immediately hurried into blood and confusion, attended with a spirit of prayer in some of God's own people: And with a publick acknowledgment of God in this day in the nation.

III. I should now proceed to my last thing, to shew you, that in this state, wherein a land is so filled with sin, as absolutely to put the determination of all things into the hand of sovereignty, and where yet there remains some evidences that God hath not utterly forsaken us, what is required of us, what is expected from us, that may be a means to turn away the wrath and displeasure of God from this poor land and nation.

I should have spoken to the following things.

1. That whatsoever be the language of God's calls, unless there be a general compliance with them, this land cannot be saved.

2. I should have shewn you, that all the diligence, and the courage, and the watchfulness of the rulers, shall not be able to preserve us from that destruction which we have deserved; unless something else be done ere long, their hearts will faint, and their hands fail, and their thoughts be divided. For that alone will not do.

3. Prayer will not do it in this case, tho' that be necessary and required, it will not do it. God doth not cry to us merely that we should cry to him. *Why criest thou?* said God to *Joshua*, *There is an accursed thing*: Why dost thou lie upon thy face, and cry, and pray, when judgment is coming upon you? There is an accursed thing got among you. It is so with us.



4. To speak very plain in a plain case; the state of this nation is such, let our expectation and our hopes be what they will, and prognosticks be multiplied, God can multiply upon another hand: the case of this nation is such, that without repentance evidenced, and universal reformation sincerely endeavoured, *England* cannot be saved, will not be saved; God will forsake it, destruction from the Lord will overtake us.

5. I should have told you also what I judge indispensably necessary that any such reformation may be obtained in this nation. As,

(1.) That there be through the providence of God provided another manner of administration of the word throughout the nation, than at present there is, which is the only means of conviction, and conversion unto God. Signs, and wonders, and judgments terrify; it is the word that must reform, and turn to God. And if the state of things continue so, that some who are able and wise for the work are forbid, and others, that engross all to themselves, are either unable, or negligent in it; I have no great hopes of seeing reformation in this land.

(2.) Unless the generality of magistrates be better principled for, and better instructed in their office, than as yet they seem to be, a reformation will not be carried through this nation. And,

(3.) Which is the principal; That those who have been examples in sinning, and in drawing others to sin, become examples in repenting, and reforming, and turning to God.

(4.) Lastly, That the whole nation be stirred up, and do not faint in the pursuit of it.

I have scarce been able to speak the heads of these things unto you. I wish I had strength to speak all that is in my thoughts and heart upon this matter, unto this whole nation; for hereon, and not on any thing else, depends the deliverance and safety of it.







SEVERAL  
**Practical CASES**  
 OF  
**CONSCIENCE**

RESOLV'D.  
 Deliver'd in some short DISCOURSES at  
**CHURCH-MEETINGS.**

\* **DISCOURSE I.**

**QUESTION.**

*HAT conviction of a state of sin, and of the guilt of sin, is necessary to cause a soul sincerely to look after Christ?*



**ANSWER.**

There is one thing only that I shall at present speak to, and that is this: What is the lowest condition that hath the nature of conviction in sincerity, so as that souls may not be discourag'd from closing with Christ, because they have had no greater convictions of sin? And I shall speak to it on this account; because, altho' the things that have already been spoken by others are true, and such, as those who have spoken them have found to be true by the word, and their own experience;



yet, it may be, others have not come up in their experience unto such a distinct observation of the work of conviction, as hath been laid down; that they may be discouraged. For seeing conviction is so indispensably necessary, some may say, it hath not been thus and thus with me, according as hath been declared. Therefore I would only shew what I judge to be so necessary, as that without it a soul cannot be supposed sincerely to have closed with Christ. And we having all made our profession of choosing and closing with Christ, as I would be loath to say any thing that might discourage any, lest they should have failed in the very necessary work of conviction; so I would not betray the truth of God, nor the souls of any.

Therefore I shall place it upon this: What *Jesus Christ* doth indispensably call men unto, in order to believing in him, that is indispensably required of them. And this I shall manifest out of two or three places of Scripture: *Mark ii. 17. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* Now this calling them unto repentance, is a calling them unto it by the faith which is in him. The Apostle saith, *1 Tim. i. 15. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.* What kind of sinners doth Christ call? Whom he calls to repentance, he calls to faith; and whom he calls to faith, that they may truly believe; they are sinners, opposed unto them that are righteous: *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* The *righteous*: Who are those righteous? The Scriptures tell us of these very men, that there were two sorts of them: First, Such as trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised other men. As long as a man trusteth in himself that he is righteous, Christ doth not call that man to believe. So long as a man is persuaded that his condition is good enough, he shall do well enough, that man hath no warrant to believe. Another description of these very persons, though upon another occasion, is given by the Apostle *Paul, Rom. x. 3.* where he says, they were *ignorant of the righteousness of God, and went about to establish their own righteousness.* Though they did not come to trust in themselves for righteousness; yet sought righteousness as it were by the works of the law, and went about to establish their own righteousness. *Jesus Christ* doth not call these men to believe: these righteous persons have no ground for believing. What is the conclusion? Lost sinners, saith Christ, this is that I require of you. So that this is what I assert to be indispensably necessary; namely, That they are so far convinced that they are sinners as to state and course, that they are not righteous in themselves, and can have no righteousness in themselves. I say therefore, when a person is not really convinced that he is not righteous, he is not under the call of *Jesus Christ*: and if he doth believe this, he is under a sovereign dispensation, and let not such despond.

Another direction of Christ is, *The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick, Matth. ix. 12.* There are in my apprehension two things in a sick person that have need of a physician: First, He hath an uneasiness. A man who is sick, tho' he would shift it, yet his uneasiness will cause him to send for a physician. Saith Christ, I come to such persons who say they can find no rest nor ease in their present condition. It may be, they have often tried this and that, and see all will not do, they are sick still; conscience reflects, and their hearts are burdened, and they must have relief, or they shall not be free. Secondly, There is a fear that it will end in death. This puts the sick person upon sending for a physician. When the soul is made uneasy in its state and condition, can find no rest nor ease, it thinks, if I abide here, I shall be lost for ever. This soul doth Christ call; this man will be at the charge of a physician, cost what it will.

There is another word of Christ, very remarkably speaks just to the same purpose, *Matth. xi. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* A soul finding it self under want, labouring after something, whereby it may be accepted with God, I will not confine this to extraordinary instances, for sometimes he is found of them that sought him not; but the ordinary case of a labouring soul, before closing with Christ, is to obtain from sin, pray more or less, be found in duties, and under strong desires to be accepted with God. And what is the end of these labours and endeavours? They labour and are weary; that is, they see their labour comes to no effect; they do not find rest, and peace, and acceptance with God. And here is the turning point, *Isai. lvii. 10. Thou art wearied in the largeness of thy way; yet saidst thou not there is*



*no hope.* When the soul hath laboured for acceptance with God, and comes to be weary, saith Christ: *Come unto me.* No, saith the light of nature, come unto me, trust unto your own endeavours. Saith the soul, I will try what it will do; I will not say, *there is no hope.* Saith another, I will not say so, I will go unto Christ: this is he whom Christ calls.

Now these things I do account indispensibly necessary, antecedently to believing, as to the substance of them. And this, I hope, hath been found in all our souls. And if we have obtained so far, we need not then question whether our close with Christ be sincere or not. This is all that I dare assert to be absolutely and indispensibly necessary: many pretend to believe they never were convinced thoroughly that they were not righteous; never were sick in their lives, never had fears that they should dye. These are contrary to the express rule Christ hath given, *I came not to call the righteous but sinners*; not those that say, *there is hope*; but those that say, *there is no hope.*

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## \*DISCOURSE II.

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### QUESTION.

**S**EEING the act of closing with Christ is secret and hidden, and the special times and seasons of our conversion unto God are unknown unto most: what are the most certain evidences and pledges, that we have cordially and sincerely received Christ, and returned unto God?

### ANSWER.

I do acknowledge the enquiry is very large and such as we may be straitned in, through the abundance of it. I shall only speak plainly some few things that to me are an evidence of a sincere closing with Christ, and receiving of Christ, such as I know have been of use unto some.

*First,* When there is a permanency and abiding in the choice we have made of Christ, notwithstanding opposition against it, that we shall be sure to meet withal, I do not speak to the nature of the choice, or the means of it, how the mind is prepared for it; but I speak unto the poorest, the weakest of the flock, that may be enquiring, whether they have made a sincere choice of Christ or not; I say, they may try it by the permanency and abiding in their choice against opposition.

And there are two sorts of oppositions that will try us and shake us; as to our choice, as I have found it, if I have had any experience of these things.

1. Opposition from charges of the guilt of sin, and the law.

2. Opposition from temptations unto sin.

1. There will, even after sincere believing and closing with Christ, be many a heavy charge brought against a soul from the law, and the guilt of sin in the conscience. Now in such a case the enquiry is: what the soul abides by, when it is shaken? Why truly, if a man go only upon mere convictions, on such shaking impressions of the guilt of sin, he will be very ready, and enclined in his own mind, to tack about to some other relief. He puts out fair for his voyage, the storm arises, the ship will not carry him, he must tack about for another harbour.



I have known it so with some, and experienced when the wind hath sat very strong that way with my self: when the guilt of sin hath been charged with all its circumstances, the soul hath been very hardly able to keep its hold, yet notwithstanding resolved, I will trust to Christ; but it hath been tacking about to self again, I must remedy this, have relief for this from my self, I cannot abide by it, and live wholly upon Christ, and when the storm is over, then I will out to sea again. I say this is no good sign to me, when things are so: but when a soul in all those charges, that sometimes come upon it, abides the issue, here I will trust upon Christ, let the worst come upon me; This I call a permanency in our choice against opposition. I hope you have experience of it.

2. There must be a permanency in our choice of Christ against temptations unto sin, as well as against the charges from sin. Truly the former of abiding with Christ against the charges from sin, is our daily work. It is sometimes more high and pressing, but it is our daily work. But there are also temptations unto sin, it may be to the neglect of our duty, or to a compliance in any evil way (which we are subject unto while in the body) and perhaps great sins. Here *Joseph's* reply applied to Christ, is that which doth argue our choice of Christ to be sincere. *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* When the soul can draw a prevailing argument from that: *How shall I do this, and relinquish my Lord Christ? I will not do this against him, whom I have chosen.* This is a good argument, if frequently reiterated, that our choice of Christ is sincere.

*Secondly*, Growing up in a love unto the person of Christ is a great evidence to me of a sincere choice of Christ. It is a blessed field that is before me, but I shall but hint things unto you. When the soul hath received Christ, it cannot but study Christ: and though it is no argument against the sincerity of a man's faith and grace, that he doth principally regard the offices, and graces of Christ, and the benefits we have by him, yet it is an argument against the thrift and growth of it. For a thriving faith and grace will come to respect principally the person of Christ. I mean this: when the soul studies the person of Christ, the glory of God in him, of his natures, the union of them in one person, of his love, condescension, and grace; and the heart is drawn out to love him, and cry, *Doubtless I count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of Christ Jesus my Lord: what is thy beloved more than another beloved? My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousands; he is altogether lovely:* to see an excellency, a desirableness in the person of Christ, so as to grow in admiration and love of him, is to me an evidence, that when all fails besides, will greatly support the soul and persuade it, that its choice is true. Nay, it is one of the most spiritual evidences; for I much question, whether an unregenerate man can love Christ for his own sake at all. But it is a good sign of growth, when our love to the person of Christ grows, when we meditate much upon it, and think much about it. I could shew you wherein the beauty of Christ's person doth much consist, but I have not time now to do it.

*Thirdly*, Another evidence to me of the soul's having made a sincere choice of Christ is, when it continues to approve, judge well of, and every day more and more to see the glory, the excellency, the holiness, the grace which is in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, approves of it as not only a necessary way, a way it has betaken it self to, because it must unavoidably perish in any other way; but when it approves of it to be a most excellent way, in pardoning sin freely through the atonement he hath made, and the imputation of his righteousness unto us; while the righteousness, the holiness, and the grace of God in all this is glorified. Saith the soul, what a blind, wretched creature was I, that I did not see an excellency in this way before? It is better than the way of the law, and the old covenant; I approve of this way with all my heart; if all other ways were set before me, and made possible, I would choose this way of going to God by Jesus Christ, as the best way, that brings most glory to God, and most satisfaction unto the creature, and is most suited to the desires of my heart; I would have no other way. *I am the way, the truth, and the life,* says Christ; and this I will abide by, whatsoever becomes of me, replies the soul; though I should perish, I will abide by it, since God hath given me such a discovery of the glory of saving sinners by Christ, that is inferior to nothing but the glory of heaven. I see that glory to

God



God in it, that exaltation to Christ, whom I would love, that honour to the holy Spirit, and safety to my own soul, that I will abide by it. A growing in the approbation of this way gives some assurance that we have made a true and sincere choice of Christ.

Give me leave to add this one thing more,

*Fourthly*, That a delight in obedience unto God by Christ, in the ways of his own appointment, is a great evidence that we have chosen Christ and he us; chosen him as our King, Prophet, and Priest. The ways of the worship of God in his Church and ordinance are the ways and worship of God in Christ, which he hath appointed: take these things abstractedly and in themselves, and we should be apt to say of them, as was said of Christ, *There is no beauty in them, nor glory that they should be desired*. There is much more outward beauty and glory in other ways that Christ hath not appointed. But if we love the ways Christ hath appointed, because he hath appointed them, then we chose those ways because we have chosen him to be our King; and that is it which gives them beauty and life. And when the ways of Christ's appointment grow heavy and burthen some to us, we are weary of them, and are willing to have our neck from under the yoke; it is a sign we grow weary of him, who is the author of them, and this is a great sign that we never made a right and sincere choice of him.

Many other things might be offered as evidences of sincere closing with Christ; but these are some which have been of use to me, and I hope they may be so unto some of you.

## DISCOURSE III.

### QUESTION.

**W**HAT concern have we in the sins of the day wherein we live?

### ANSWER.

All sins may be referred to two heads.

*First*, Irreligion.

*Secondly*, Immorality.

*First*, Irreligion. And that may be reduced to two heads: Atheism, and false worship: you may add also particularly, the contempt of all instituted worship. It takes up much of the sins against the first table; however at present I shall only speak of the first of them.

As to atheism then, it may be no age can parallel that wherein we live, consider all the ways whereby the atheism of man's heart may discover it self. For take it absolutely and in the seat of it, it is found only in the heart of man; unless some one or other prodigious instance breaks out sometime, as we have had in our days; but otherwise, *The fool hath said in his heart there is no God*. The heart is the seat of atheism.

But we consider the ways whereby this atheism may and doth manifest it self.

(1.) By horrid, cursed, blasphemous swearing, which is a contempt of the name of God. And when did it ever more abound in this nation?

(2.) By reproaching of the spirit of God. Perhaps this is the peculiar sin of the nation at this day, and that the like hath not been known, or heard of, in any nation under the sun.

(3.) By



(3.) By scoffing, at all holy things, at the Scriptures, at every thing that carries a reverence and fear of God; so that a man who dares profess a fear of God in what he doth, makes himself a scorn.

(4.) Contempt of all God's providential warnings, is another proof of atheism. Never had a nation more warnings from God's providence, nor ever were they more despised. These things, brethren, are not done in a corner, they are perpetrated in the face of the sun. The steam of them darkens the whole heaven, and they abound more and more every day.

*Secondly*, Shall we go to the other head, *viz.* Immorality, and see how it is there? It would be an endless thing to go over the sins that reign among us; oppression, blood, uncleanness, sensuality, drunkenness, all to the height raging and reigning in the nation. I mention these things as a matter to be bewailed before the Lord by us this day, and we ought to be affected with the consideration of them.

Unto this great prevalency and predominancy of sin in the whole nation, there is added a strange and unspeakable security. The truth is, men were a little awaked one while in the nation, when the judgments of God, the pestilence, the fire, the sword, and the year after another warning from heaven were upon us; then there was a little awaking, like a man out of a dead sleep that lifts up his head and rubs his eyes for a time. But I can say this, that it is now towards forty years since God enabled me to observe something in the world, and to my knowledge, I never observed this nation in that state of security, wherein it is at this day. For even in former time there were warnings continually that God had a controversy with the nation, and those that had any fear of God spake one to another about it, and we saw and found their warnings were not in vain. But here is now a general security. Men complain of straights, want, poverty, and the like; but as to any thing wherein God hath to do with the world, either my observation doth greatly deceive me, or I never saw I think so general a security as at this day in this nation. And this security hath reached us all, even the Churches of God themselves.

These things are matter of fact. The whole question is: whether we are greatly to be concerned in these things or not? They are the sins of wicked men, and they are the sins of the persecutors of God's people and the like; and what have we to do with them?

The *Psalmist* of old said, that *Rivers of tears ran down his eyes, because men did not keep the law of God*. And you know that God doth set a special mark upon those, not that are free from the abominations of the age; but upon those that mourn for the abominations, that are in the midst of us. It will not be enough for us, that we are free from those abominations, unless we are found to mourn for them. Brethren, our own hearts know we are guilty in this matter, and that we had need seek the face of God this day to give us a deeper sense of these things, than we have obtained. The name of God is blasphemed, the spirit of God reproached, a flood of iniquity spreads it self over the nation, the land of our nativity, over the inheritance of Christ, over a nation professing the reformed religion; all things go backward; every thing declines. Indeed, brethren, if you will not, I do acknowledge here before you, and to my own shame, I have great guilt upon me in this matter, that I have not been sensible of the abominations of the nation, so as to mourn for them and be humbled for them, as I ought to have been. And you will do well to search your hearts, and consider how it is with you; whether indeed you have been affected with these things, or whether you have not thought all is well, while all hath been well with your selves and families, and it may be with the Church that may have no trouble upon that account. The security that is upon the nation is dismal, and, I may say, I see no way or means whereby the nation should be freed from this security. The conduct of the ministry which they are under generally, is not able to free them from this security, nor the dispensation of the word; that it seems to be a security from God to lead on the nation to judgment, the means for the removal of it, and the awaking of us being laid aside. And if it comes this way, or that way, any way, though we see not the morning of it, you will find your selves concerned in it. *Who may abide the day of his coming!*

We



We may do well, brethren, to consider the state of the Church of God in the world, among ourselves, and our own condition. I need not tell you how it is in the world; but this I can say, that to my apprehensions, the interest of Christ and the Gospel was never so fast going down in the world since it came into it, as at this day. I will give you my reason of what I say. When the Gospel was first planted, and brought into the world, the Devil was not able to bring the Church into its apostasy under six, or seven, or eight hundred years, and that by degrees. Since the time of the reformation, the Church was progressive for about seventy years; it stood at a stay about the same proportion of time, and ever since it hath been going backward, streightned in all places, the power of it decays, and the peace of it is taken away, and destruction every where seems to lie at the door. Many indeed are in great misery and distress: some I have heard of lately, sold for slaves for the testimony of their conscience. How is it with the Church of Christ in this nation? Truly some in great poverty, in great affliction, in great distress; and I am afraid, we and others have not hearts to relieve them as we ought to do in a due manner: however, let us help them with our prayers. And that which is worst of all, there seems to me, I must acknowledge it, to be a very great decay in all Churches of Christ in the nation, especially among those of us who have had most peace, most prosperity. That which we call zeal for God is almost quite lost among us. Some of us have almost forgot whether there be such a thing as the cause and interest of Christ in the world. We who have cryed and prayed about it, and had it upon our hearts, have sat down in our narrow compass, and almost forgot there is such a thing as the interest of Christ in the world, so as to have an active zeal for the ordinances of God according to rule, as God requires of us. Our primitive love, how is it decay'd? Value of the ordinances of Christ, and the society of his people for edification, how cold are we grown in these things? How little is the Church society upon our hearts, which some of us remember, when it was the very joy of our souls? Truly we have reason to lift up our cry to God, that he would return and visit the Churches, and pour out a new, fresh, reviving spirit upon them, that we fall not under the power of these decays, till we come to formality, and God withdraws himself from us, and leaves us, which he seems to be at the very point of doing.

Then, brethren, let us remember our own Church, that God would in an especial manner revive the spirit of life, power, and holiness among us: that he would be pleas'd to help the officers of the Church to discharge their duty, and not suffer them to fall under any decay of grace or gifts, unfitting of them to the discharge of their office to the edification of the Church: that he would give them also to beware and take heed of formality, as to the exercise of gifts in their administration; and that he would take care of us, since we are apt to fall under these things. Let us pray, that we may be acted by the spirit of God, and enlivened by the grace of God in all things we do.

Have any of us any particular occasions in reference to temptations, trials, and troubles, we may bear it upon our hearts to the Lord this day. This is much better than by multiplying a company of formal bills. The Lord help us to know the plague of our own hearts, and to be enabled to plead with the Lord upon this opportunity, for grace and mercy to help us in every time of need.

6 R DIS-  
 We have much to say of our faith, and our affections, him who is the life and center of the glory and the power of all spiritual life, and of all we have to do with God. I brought it in only to let us know, that if we would revive our spiritual life (and believe it, if any of us are not convinced in our spiritual life) we are to abide more at the well-head of life: it is the direction of our Lord Jesus Christ, abide in me, and ye abide in me, you can bring forth no fruit. And every such branch shall be so and so pruned.

1. Add meditation between the times of prayer, and meditation of Christ, he is the life and center of the glory and the power of all spiritual life, and of all we have to do with God. I brought it in only to let us know, that if we would revive our spiritual life (and believe it, if any of us are not convinced in our spiritual life) we are to abide more at the well-head of life: it is the direction of our Lord Jesus Christ, abide in me, and ye abide in me, you can bring forth no fruit. And every such branch shall be so and so pruned.



## \*DISCOURSE IV.

### QUESTION.

**H**OW may we recover from a decay of the principle of grace?

### ANSWER.

We have been speaking concerning the decay of the principle of grace; and I will now offer you some few thoughts that may be applied unto our recovery from the decay of this principle; in doing which, I shall tell you no more than I think I have found myself.

If we would recover spiritual life, we must come as near as we can unto, and abide as much as we are able at the well-head of life. Christ is the spring of our spiritual life; he is every way our life. It is in a derivation of life from Christ, and in conformity to him, that we must look for our spiritual life.

Before I mention how we should approach unto, and lie at this well-head of life, let me observe to you this one thing: That when there is a general contagious disease, the plague, or the like, every man will look to his health and safety with reference to other occasions, but will be most careful in regard to the general contagion. Now if forsaking this spring of life be the plague of the age, and the plague of the place where we live, and the plague of Christians, we ought to be very careful, lest this general contagion should reach us more or less, one way or other. It is evident to me, who have some advantage to consider things, as much as ordinary men, that the apostasy, the cursed apostasy that spreads itself over this nation, and whose fruits are in all ungodliness and uncleanness, consists in an apostasy from, and forsaking the person of Christ. Some write of how little use the person of Christ is in religion, none, but to declare the doctrine of the Gospel to us. Consider the preaching and talk of men. You have much preaching and discourse about virtue and vice; so it was among the philosophers of old; but Jesus Christ is laid aside, quite as a thing forgotten, as if he was of no use, no consideration in religion; as if men knew not at all how to make any use of him, as to living to God.

This being the general plague, as is evident, of the apostasy of the day wherein we live, if we are wise we shall consider very carefully, whether we ourselves are not influenced, more or less, with it; as where there is a general temptation, it doth, more or less, try all men, the best of believers, and prevail, more or less, upon their spirits. I am afraid we have not, some of us, that love for Christ, that delight in him, nor do make that constant abode with him, as we have done. We have very much lost out of our faith, and our affections, him, who is the life and center, the glory and the power of all spiritual life, and of all we have to do with God, Jesus Christ himself. I brought it in only to let us know, that if we would revive our spiritual life (and believe it, if any of us are not concerned in our spiritual decays, these are sapless things, and will be heard with as much weariness, as spoken) we are to abide more at the well-head of life: it is the direction of our Lord Jesus Christ, *Abide in me, unless ye abide in me, you can bring forth no fruit.* And every such branch shall be so and so purged.



But you will say: How shall we do so? How shall we abide, more than we have done, at this well-head of life?

1. We are to abide at the well-head of life by a frequency of the acts of faith upon the person of Christ. Faith is that grace, not only whereby we are implanted into Christ, but whereby we also abide in him: if so, methinks the frequent actings of faith upon the person of Christ, are a drawing near to the well-head of life. And though we are to put forth the vigour, the earnestness, the watchfulness of our hearts unto obedience; yet a ceasing to continue in the acting of faith upon the person of Christ, even under the vigour of our own endeavours by those general, outward desires of walking with God, and living to him, will weaken us, and we shall find ourselves losers by it. Do you all understand me? I am not teaching the wise, and more knowing of the flock; I would speak unto the meanest. I say, suppose we should resolve with great earnestness, diligence, watchfulness to abide in duties, in inward duties, to watch over our hearts, which is required of us; yet, if in our so doing we are taken off thereby from frequent actings of faith upon Christ, as the spring of our life; we shall decay under all our endeavours, watchfulness, and multiplication of duties. Wherefore, my brethren, let me give you this advice, that you would night and day, upon your beds, in your ways, upon all occasions, have the exercise of faith upon the person of Christ; faith working by a view of him as represented in the Gospel, by trust in him, and by invocation of him, that he may be continually nigh unto you. And you cannot have him nigh unto you, unless you make yourselves by these actings of faith, through his grace, continually nigh unto him: so you will abide at the well-head.

I could shew you those excellent advantages that we should have by continually being near to Christ, who is the overflowing spring of grace, and from whence it will issue out to us, if we abide with him, be nigh to him, and keep up to this well-head.

2. Abide with him in love. Oh, the warm affections for Christ, which some of you can witness concerning yourselves, that your hearts have been filled withal towards Christ, when you have been under his call to believe on him! And it is a marvelous way of abiding with Christ, to abide with him by love, which is called *cleaving to God and Christ*; it is the affection of adhesion, and gives a sense of union.

How then shall we get our hearts to abide with Christ by love?

This is a subject that if I were to preach upon, how many things would presently offer themselves to us, from the excellency of his person, from the excellency of his love, from our necessity of him, the advantages and benefits we have by him, and his kindness towards us. All these things, and many more, would quickly present themselves unto us.

But I will name but one thing, and I name it the rather, because I heard it mention'd in prayer since I came in: Labour to have your hearts filled with a love to Jesus Christ, as there is in him made a representation of all divine excellencies. This was God's glorious design. It is not to be separated from his design of glorifying himself in the work of redemption; for a great part of God's glorious design in the incarnation of Christ, was in him to represent himself unto us, who is *the image of the invisible God, the express image of his person*. Now if you do but consider Christ, as God is gloriously represented unto you in him, you will find him the most proper object for divine love, for that love which is wrought in your hearts by the Holy Ghost, for that love that hath sweetness, complacency, satisfaction in it. Then let us remember that we exercise our minds to consider Christ, as all the lovely properties of the divine nature and counsels of his will, as to love and grace, are manifested by Christ.

If we would abide at the well-head of life, we must abide in these things: and let love be excited to Christ under this especial consideration, as he who represents the supreme object of your love, God himself, in all the glorious properties of his nature.

3. Add meditation hereunto; study Christ more, and all things of Christ; delight more in the hearing and preaching of Christ: he is our best friend: let not the difficulties of the mystery of his person and grace deter you. There are wonderful things of the counsels of heaven, and of the glory of the holy God in the person of Christ,



Christ, as the head of the Church; if you would be found enquiring into them; an unsearchable treasure of divine wisdom, grace and love, are laid up in Christ; therefore meditate upon them more. Let me assure you, this will prove the best expedient for the recovery of our spiritual life. And I will abide by this doctrine to eternity, that without it we shall never recover spiritual life to the glory of God in Christ.

4. And then, brethren, seeing we have in the next place felt decays in the midst of the performance of multiplied duties, labour to bring spirituality into your duties.

What is that, you will say, and wherein doth it consist?

It is the due exercise of every grace that is required to the discharge of that duty. Let every such grace be in its due exercise; and that is to be spiritual in duty: As for instance; Would a man be spiritual in all his prayers? Let him then consider what grace, and what exercise of grace is required to this duty: A due fear and reverence of the name of God, faith, love, and delight in him; an humble sense of his own wants, earnest desires of supply, dependance upon God for guidance, and the like. We all know that these are the graces required to the discharge of this duty of praying by the Holy Ghost. And let these graces be in a due exercise, and then you are spiritual in this duty. Is the duty charity, giving a supply to the poor? There is to be a ready mind, a compassionateness of heart, and obedience unto the command of Christ in that particular; these are the graces required to the discharge of that duty, and to watch against the contrary vices. So that if we would bring spirituality into duty, it is to exercise the graces that are required by the rule to the performance of that duty.

I shall only farther give you this one caution: Have a care that your head in notion, and your tongue in talk, don't too fast empty your hearts of truth: we are apt to lay it up in our heads by notions, and bring it forth in talk, and not let it be in our hearts; and this weakens spiritual life greatly. We hear the word preached, and it is of great concernment what account we shall give of the word that hath been preached unto you; for we that preach must give an account of our preaching; and so must you of what you hear: and many a good word is spoken truly, and yet we see but little fruit of it. And the reason of this is, that some when they hear it, take no farther regard of it, but *let it slip*, as the Apostle speaks, *Heb. ii. 1.* And if we complain of the treacherousness of our memories, it is the most harmless way of the slipping out of the word. It is not the treachery of our memories, but of our hearts and affections, that makes the heart like a broken vessel, that makes all the rents in it where the water run out, as the comparison is. The word slips out by putting your affections into carnal exercise; and it quickly finds its way to depart from the heart that gives it no better entertainment. We talk away a sermon, and the sense of it; which robs us both of the sermon, and the fruit of it. A man hears a good word of truth, and instead of taking the power of it into his heart, he takes the notion of it into his mind, and is satisfied therewith: but this is not the way to thrive. God grant that we may never preach to you any thing, but what we may labour to have an experience of the power of it in our own hearts, and to profit ourselves by the word, wherewith we design to profit others. And I pray God grant that you also may have some profit by the word dispensed to you, that it slip not out through carnal affections, and be not drawn out through notions and talk, with a regardlessness to treasure it up in your hearts.

These things we are diligently to attend unto; if we would recover our spiritual losses, that we are complaining of, and that not without just Cause.

DIS-

1. Add meditation hereto; study Christ more, and all things of Christ; be light more in the hearing and preaching of Christ; he is our best friend: let not the difficulties of the mystery of his person and grace deter you. There are wonderful things of the counsels of heaven, and of the glory of the holy God in the person of Christ.



## \* DISCOURSE V.

### QUESTION.

**I***T was queried by some, how we may make our application unto Christ, not in general; but under what notion and apprehension of the person of Christ?*

### ANSWER.

Because some seem to apprehend there might be danger in terminating our worship upon the nature of Christ as a creature, I shall give you my thoughts and directions in it. And,

*First*, You must observe, we are to have no conceptions in our acting of any duty towards Christ or about him, but with respect unto his person; as he is God and Man in one person. It is not lawful for us to have any apprehensions of Christ, to make any application to him as Man only. Nor is it lawful for us to have any apprehensions of him as God only. But all our apprehensions of Christ, and all our addresses unto him, must be as God and Man in one person. So he is, and so he will be to all eternity. The union is inseparable and indissoluble. And for any man to make his application unto Christ either as God, or as Man, is to set up a false Christ, Christ is God and Man in one person, and no other. So in all our actings of faith upon him, and application unto him, we ought to consider him, as he was *the seed of David*, and as *God over all blessed for ever*, in one person. This makes the great idolatry among the Papists, in the image of Christ they represent the human nature of Christ separated from his Deity, for they can make no representation of one, that is God and Man in one person: hereby they become guilty of double idolatry, referring the mind unto one that is a man, and no more; and doing it by the means of an image.

*Secondly*, The person of Christ is the immediate and proper object of all divine worship. The worship of Christ is commanded in the first commandment. By worship, I intend faith, love, trust, subjection of soul, invocation on the name of Christ, every act of the soul and mind, whereby we ascribe infinite divine excellencies unto God, which is the worship of the mind. See *Joh. v. 23. It is the will of God, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* How do we honour the Father? By divine faith, trust, love, and worship, making him our end and our reward. So the Son is to be honoured. And as to the divine person of the Son of God, being of the same nature, essence, and substance with the Father, there is no dispute of that among them by whom his Deity is acknowledged.

*Thirdly*, The divine person of the Son of God lost nothing of his glory and honour, that was due unto him, by the assumption of our human nature. Tho' thereby he became the Son of man, as well as the Son of God, a Lamb for sacri-



fice; yet he is still in his whole and entire person, the object of all that worship I spake of before; and the whole Church of God agree together in giving that worship unto him, *Rev. v. 8, 9. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seal thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* Jesus Christ is here distinguished from the Father; there is *He that sitteth upon the throne; and the Lamb*; and he is considered as incarnate, as a Lamb slain: and yet there is all the glory, honour, praise, and worship, that is given to him that sitteth upon the throne, the Father, given to Jesus Christ, God and Man, the Lamb slain, who hath redeemed us with his blood.

*Fourthly*, This person of Christ, God-Man must not be so much as severed by any conception of the mind. For distinction, as God and Man he may be considered two ways, either absolutely in himself, or in the discharge of his mediatory office. And this double consideration produceth a double kind of worship to the person of Christ.

1. Consider Christ absolutely in his own person, as the Son of God incarnate, and so he is the immediate and ultimate object of our faith, prayer, and invocation. So that a man may lawfully, under the guidance and conduct of the spirit of God, direct his prayer immediately to the person of Christ. You have the example of *Stephen* in his last prayer. *Lord Jesus, saith he, receive my spirit.* These were the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he died: *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.* And *Stephen*, when he died, committed his spirit into the hands of Jesus Christ: *Lord Jesus* (for that is the name of the Son of God incarnate, *He shall be called Jesus, for he shall save you from your sins*) *into thy hands I commit my spirit.* So that a person may make an immediate address in his prayers and supplications unto the person of Christ, as God and Man. I look upon it as the highest act of faith that a believer is called unto in this world, to resign a departing soul into his hands, letting go all present things, and future hopes; to resign, I say, a departing soul quietly and peaceably into the hands of Christ, Now this, *Stephen* did with respect unto Jesus: *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* There he left himself by faith. So we may apply our selves unto him upon any other account, in the acting of faith upon any other occasion.

2. Consider Christ in the discharge of his mediatory office. And under that formal consideration, as discharging his mediatory office; he is not the ultimate object of our faith and invocation; but we call upon God, even the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. *We through Christ have believed in God*, saith *Peter* in one of his *Epistles*. And it implies a contradiction to have it otherwise: for the calling him Mediator sheweth he is a means between God and us; and so it is contradictory to say, our faith is terminated in his mediatory office. This he calls asking the Father in his name. *You shall ask the Father in my name*: that is, expressly plead the intervention of the mediation of Christ. And so the Apostle tells us in that grand rubrick and directory of Church worship, *Eph. ii. 18. By whom we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.* The Father is proposed as the ultimate object of access in our worship; and the Spirit is the effecting cause, enabling us unto this worship; and the Son is the means whereby we approach unto God.

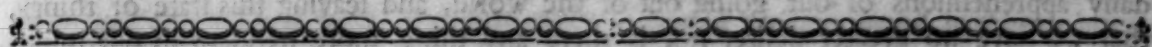
All that I shall add hereunto is this: seeing there is in Scripture a double worship of Christ that is immediate (for his person is considered absolutely, and as Mediator between God and man) which of these ought we principally to apply our selves unto?

I answer plainly,

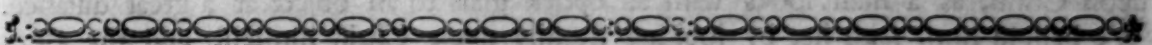


(1.) Our direction for solemn worship in the Church, generally respects Christ as Mediator in Scripture. The general worship that is to be performed unto God in the assemblies of the saints, doth look upon Christ as executing his mediatory office; and so our address is unto the throne of grace by him. By him we enter into the holy place; through him, and by him unto God. *I bow my knees unto [God] the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Eph. iii. 12. God, considered as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the proper, ultimate object of the solemn worship of the Church.

(2.) In treating and dealing about our own souls, under the conduct of the spirit of God, it is lawful and expedient for us in our prayers and supplications to make addresses to the person of Christ, as *Stephen* did.



## \* DISCOURSE VI.



### QUESTION.

**H**OW may we make our addresses to Christ for the exercise of grace; that is, that we may have grace strengthened, and be ready, for all exercise? Or, how may we make application to Christ that we may receive grace from him to recover from decays?

### ANSWER.

I think the direction given by our Saviour himself is so plain, and doth so fall in with our experience, that we need not look much farther. Saith he, *Unless you abide in me, you cannot bear fruit*. The business we aim at is fruit-bearing; which consists as much in the internal vigorous actings of grace, as in the performance of outward duties; to be fruitful in our minds and souls, as well as in our lives. The way for that, saith our Saviour, is, *Abide in me*. And unless we do so, he tells us plainly, do we whatever we will else, we *cannot bring forth fruit*. So that the whole of our fruitfulness depends upon our abiding in Christ: there cannot then be much more said unto this business, but to enquire a little, what it is to abide in Christ.

Certainly it is not a mere not going off from Christ, as we say, a man abides, when he doth not go away. For I hope, that under all the decays we have complained of, and want of fruitfulness; yet we have not left Christ, and gone away from him. We have so far abode in him, as the branch abideth in the root, from whence it hath its communication and supplies. Therefore there is something in particular included in this abiding in Christ, dwelling in Christ, and Christ dwelling in us.

And there seems to be this in it, that to abide in Christ, is to be always nigh unto Christ, in the spiritual company of Christ, and in communication with Christ. It doth not lye in a naked, essential act of believing, whereby we are implanted into Christ, and will not go from him; but there is something of an especial, spiritual activity of soul in this abiding in Christ, it is abiding with him, and in his presence.

And as this abiding with Christ must be by some acts of our souls, let us consider what acts those are, which may give a little farther light into this matter. And



*First*, it must be certainly by some act of our minds.

*Secondly*, By some act of our wills.

*Thirdly*, By some act of our affections.

And thus we abide with Christ, which is the way certainly to bring forth fruit.

*First*, There is an abiding with Christ in our minds. Now this to me is in contemplation, and thoughts of him night and day: *I sought him on my bed, in the night*, saith the spouse: to consider very much the person of Christ, to contemplate upon him as vested with his glorious office, and as entrusted and designed by the Father to this work. *We all*, saith the Apostle, *with open face beholding the glory of God, as in a glass, are changed into the same image from glory to glory by the spirit of the Lord*. My brethren! That which you and I are aiming at, is to be *changed into the same image*; that is, into the image and likeness of the glory of God in Christ. I dare boldly say, that by those of us, who have reason to have daily apprehensions of our going out of the world, and leaving this state of things, that we have no greater desire, nor is there any thing more frequent in our minds than this, that we may be more and more changed into that image before we go out of this world; for we are looking after perfection in likeness to Christ. Therefore aged Christians especially will bear witness, that there is nothing now we long for more, than to be more and more changed into the image and likeness of Christ. How shall we get to this? Why, saith he, the way is by looking steadily upon Christ, as a man looks with an optick glass to an object at a great distance. We behold him, saith he, by looking steadily upon Christ himself, and the glory of God in him. Now there is a wonderful large object for us to behold; for when you look upon the glory of God in Christ, you have what you please of Christ for the object of your eye and view; the person of Christ, the office of Christ, the merit of Christ, the example of Christ, the death of Christ, and what you will, so you be much intent in your thoughts and minds, much in immediate contemplation about Christ. I do not know how you find it, brethren; but it is the advice I would give you, who are aged Christians, and not likely to continue long in this world, to exercise your selves in immediate contemplations upon Christ. All the teachings you have had from ministers, the principal end of them have been to enable you to this; and really if I know any thing, we shall find them accompanied with a sweet, transforming power, beyond what we have had experience of in other ways and duties: *We shall be changed into the same likeness*.

Well then, we abide with Christ in the acts of our mind, by immediate thoughtfulness and contemplation upon Christ in the night, and upon our beds, and in our walkings, and by the way side, and in times we set apart for meditation, we are greatly to labour after an intuitive view of Christ, that is a direct view in the contemplation of Christ.

*Secondly*, If you will abide with Christ there must be an acting of your will in it also, and that is in great diligence and carefulness about that obedience which Christ doth require in all the instances of it. This is a great way of abiding with Christ, when we labour to have our wills in a readiness unto all the instances of obedience that Christ requireth at our hands. Let that be the question, whether it be the will of God that we should do thus, or not. And if it be so, pray let us be ready to shew we do abide with Christ, by yielding chearful and willing obedience to him in this instance and duty which he calleth us unto, and so in all other things. I would have every one of us think often of this matter, what it is Christ requires of me personally, in a way of duty and obedience. And I would have us labour to have in great readiness all things which Christ requires of us. And especially, brethren, I would have this in a readiness, that Christ requires of me to walk very circumspectly, and carefully, to keep my self from spots, and pollution, and defilements by converse in the world. This Christ requires at all times, in all instances, and upon all occasions. What have we been preaching? What have former teachers been instructing us in? All that you are taught is, that you should come to the knowledge of all instances of duty, and the way of them which Christ requires at your hands. And if you know these things, happy are you, if you do them.

This is your fruit-bearing, a direct contemplation upon Christ; wherein I would beg, that both you and my own soul might be found more to abound, while we



are in this world, and you will find Christ in the discharge of this duty will make very near approaches, and frequent visits to your hearts, more in the discharge of this duty, than of any other; and to have our hearts in a readiness to comply with every instance of obedience Christ requires at our hands.

*Thirdly*, There is an abiding with Christ in point of affection. There may be love and delight in all these things; if there be not, very spiritual contemplations will be a bar. There is no duty, that is required of any man in this world so spiritual, so heavenly, so evangelical, but through want of love and delight a man may be slothful in performing of it. I may tye my self to do so this hour, or that hour, and have no benefit to my own soul, nor give any glory unto God, if there be not love and delight in it. They will sweeten the duty, and refresh the heart of God and man, Christ and us. So labour, brethren, and pray greatly for it, that you may abide with Christ with delight, that you may find a sweetness and refreshment in it, and that every season of retiring unto Christ may bring a kind of spiritual joy and gladness to your hearts. Now you have a great opportunity, having shaken off the occasions of life and other concernments, to dwell with Christ, now it is a good time.

## \*DISCOURSE VII.

### QUESTION.

**W**HEN our own faith is weakened as to the hearing of our prayers; when we our selves are hindered within our selves from believing the answer of our Prayers; have no ground to expect we should be heard, or ground to believe we are heard: what are those things, that greatly weaken our faith, as to the answer of our prayers; that though we continue to pray, yet our faith is weakened as to the hearing of our prayers? And what are the grounds that weaken mens faith in such a state?

### ANSWER.

If our hearts are not duly prepared to the consideration of the great and glorious properties, presence, and holiness of God, and duly affected with them in our preparation for prayer, it is certain we can have no faith for the hearing of our prayers.

It is also of great importance, that we consider aright in what state the things we seek for are promised; whether temporal things, that are left to God; or spiritual, that lye under a promise, and so we may press God immediately about them.

There are two things that are certainly great weakners of our faith as to God's hearing our prayers.

*First*, The one is, that intermixture of self, which is apt to creep into our prayers, in publick especially, in the congregation and assemblies, self reputation in the exercise of gifts, or whatever it be, weakens our faith as to the expectation of God's hearing our prayers.

*Secondly*, The other is, that we pray with earnestness and fervency, with noise and clamour of speech; but do not industriously pursue the things we pray for. Un-



lets we watch and follow after these things, we shall not have ground of faith for the hearing of our prayers. As for instance; when the soul is barthened with a corruption, there is nothing we are more fervent in prayer unto God against; yet when we have done this, we take no more care to get it mortified. Where is our faith, that our prayers may be heard in this thing? we must pursue our prayers, or it will weaken our faith as to the hearing of them. We all pray; but do we believe that God will hear and answer our prayers?

I shall not speak unto the nature of that faith we exercise, or what assurance we may have of God's hearing our prayers; but I will tell you plainly what hinders in us the answer of our prayers.

1. We are not clear that our persons are accepted. God had respect unto *Abel*, and his offering; and not unto *Cain*, and his offering. We can have no more faith that our prayers are heard, than we have faith that our persons are accepted. How many of us are dubious, and know not whether we believe or no? or are the children of God or no? According as our faith is, as to the acceptance of our persons; so ordinarily our faith will be, as to the hearing of our prayers. I do acknowledge, that sometime under extraordinary darkniess, or temptation, whilst a person doth not at all know, nor hath any assurance, what is his own condition, whether approved, or rejected of God; yet the holy spirit of God many times gives assurance of the hearing of that prayer, which is poured out in the anguish of the soul. But let us bring things unto a good issue between God and our souls, and not complain that our prayers are not heard, when we are negligent to come unto the assurance of faith about the acceptance of our persons. We have had many days of prayer, and have not seen that return of our prayer, that we desigh'd. This evil lies at the bottom; that we have been dubious as to our state of acceptance with God. Let us labour to amend it.

2. Another thing is this; pray while you will, you will not believe your prayers are answered, if you indulge any private lust, or do not vigorously endeavour the mortification of it, according to what the Scripture and duty requires. If any lust ariseth in the soul, and we do not immediately engage to mortify it, as God requires, it will break out, and weaken our faith in all our prayers. Therefore if you will be helped to believe the answer of your prayers, labour to search your hearts. Do not think that no corruption is indulged, but such as break out into open sin. It may be, you do not know the corruption you indulge; labour therefore to find it out, and you will find how your faith is weakened thereby.

3. Again, want of having treasured up former experiences of the hearing of prayer. We have not provided as we ought in this matter. If we had laid up manifold experiences of God's having heard our prayers, it would strengthen our faith that God doth hear them. It may be some have prayed all their days, God hath kept their souls alive, that they have not wickedly departed from God, and they have obtained particular mercies; why such ought to keep a constant record of God's hearing their prayers. Every discovery made of Christ that draws our souls more to love him, and engageth us to cleave unto him, is our experience of God's hearing our prayers.

4. I might add; when we our selves are not sensible that we arise unto that fervency of prayer, that is required of them that believe. If we pray in the congregation, in our closets, or families, and when we have done are not sensible that we have risen up unto that fervency that is required, we cannot believe our prayers are answered.

It is the duty of all men to pray unto the Lord; but 'tis incumbent on none more than those, who have really and sincerely given up themselves unto God, and yet in truth have no comfortable persuasion concerning their condition. That is a state wherein I am so far from discouraging prayer, that it is your season for prayer, in the whole course of your lives. When *Paul* was first called, before such time as he had evidence of the pardon of his sins, it is said: *Behold he prays*. If they truly attend unto their state and condition, they may be sure to be the persons of whom also it will be said, behold, they pray. And even in these prayers they may exercise faith, when they have not faith to believe that their prayers are heard. But while in this condition, it will be hard to believe that their prayers are heard, when they cannot believe that their persons are accepted.



## DISCOURSE VIII.

## QUESTION.

**W**HEN may any one sin, lust, or corruption be esteemed habitually prevalent?

## ANSWER.

I shall premise some few things, before I come to answer the question.

*First*, All lusts and corruptions whatsoever, have their root and residence in our nature, the worst of them. For, saith the Apostle, *Jam. i. 14. Every man is tempted of his own lust.* Every man hath his own lust, and every man hath all lust in him; for this lust or corruption is the depravation of our nature, and is in all men. And in the root and principle of it, it is in all men even after their conversion. So saith the Apostle concerning believers, *Gal. v. 17. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, so that ye [believers] cannot do the things that ye would.* What doth the flesh lust unto? Why it lusts unto the work of it. What are they? Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, strife, sedition, heresy, envy, murder, drunkenness, revelling, and such like. The flesh lusteth unto all these things in believers, the worst things that can be mentioned. Whence is that of our Saviour, which yields to me a doctrine that is a sad truth; but so plain, that nothing can be more. He foretels marvellous troubles, great desolations and destructions that shall come upon the world, and befall all sorts of men, and says it is a day that as a snare shall come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Nothing makes me more believe that day, that terrible day of the Lord, is coming upon the face of the whole earth, than this, that it comes as a snare. Men don't take notice of it, do you therefore take heed to your selves, you that are my disciples, believers, take heed to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you at unawares. The doctrine I observe from thence is this: that the best of men have need to be warned, to take care of the worst of sins in the approach of the worst of times. Who would think, when such troubles, distresses, desolations were coming upon a nation, in that place the disciples of Christ should be in danger of being overtaken with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life? Yet he, who is the wisdom of God, knew how it would be with us. Nay, what if a man should say from observation, that professors are never more in danger of sensual, provoking sins, than when destruction is lying nearest at the door? In that day, saith he, take care.

*Secondly*, Another thing I would premise is this, that this root of sin abiding in us, as I have shewed, will upon its advantage work unto all sorts of evils, which should give us a godly jealousy over our souls, and over one another. Saith the Apostle, *Rom. vii. 8. Sin wrought in me all manner of concupiscence,*

*Thirdly*, If it be so, that sin doth thus always abide in us, and will upon occasions work to all its fruit, to all manner of concupiscence; then the mortification of sin is a continual duty, that we ought to be exercised in all our days, *Col. iii. 3. Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.* A blessed state and condition! I desire no better attainment in this world, than this holds out. But what duty does the Apostle infer from thence? Therefore, saith he, *mortify your members, which are upon the earth.* What, I pray? Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affections,



*fections, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry.* The mortification of sin is a duty incumbent upon the best of saints.

*Fourthly,* The fourth thing I would premise is this: that a particular sin doth not obtain a signal prevalency without it hath some signal advantage: for our corrupt nature is universally and equally corrupt, but a particular sin obtains prevalency by particular advantages.

It would be too long to speak of all those advantages; I shall name two, whereunto others may be reduced.

1. The inclination of constitution gives particular advantages unto particular sins. Some may be very much inclined to envy; some to wrath and passion; and others to sensual sins, gluttony, drunkenness, uncleanness, to name the things which our Saviour names and warns us of. It is with respect hereunto, that *David* said, *he would keep himself from his iniquity*, as some think. I have only this to say, that it hath been much from the fallacy of the Devil, that men have been apt to plead constitution, and the inclination of their constitution to the extenuation of their sin, when indeed it is an aggravation. I am apt to be passionate in my nature, saith one; I am sanguine, saith another, and love company. They make their natural inclinations to be a cover and excuse for their sin. But this I must say as my judgment, that if grace does not cure constitution sins, it hath cured none; and that we can have no trial of the efficacy of grace, if we have it not in curing constitution sins. The great promise is, that it shall change the nature of the wolf and the lion, of the bear, the asp, and the cockatrice, and that they shall become as lambs; which it can never do, if it doth not change it by an habitual counterworking of inclinations arising from constitution. If grace being habitual doth not change the very inclination of constitution, I know not what it doth. That is the first advantage whereby particular sins come to have signal advantage and prevalency.

2. Outward occasions. And I refer them unto two heads.

(1.) To education, particular sins get advantage by education. If we do even in education instruct our children to pride by their fineries, and deportment to themselves, if we teach them to be proud, we heap dry fowel upon them, till such time as lust will flame. Let us take heed of this. It is an easy thing to bring forth a proud generation by such means.

(2.) Society in the world, according to occasion of life, is that which inflames particular corruptions. According as men delight in their converse, so corruption will be provoked and heighthened by it.

I have spoke all these things previously to shew you where lies the nature and principle of the danger we are going to enquire into, and how it comes to that condition.

Now I shall enquire a little into the question it self: *How we may know whether a particular corruption be habitually predominant or no?*

Brethren, I take it for granted, the vilest of those lusts which our Saviour and his Apostles warn us against to mortify and crucify, may be working in the hearts and minds of the best of us; and that a particular lust may be habitually prevalent, where for particular reasons it never brings forth outward effects; therefore look to your selves. I say then, when the mind and soul is frequently and greatly, as there are occasions, urged upon and pressed with a particular lust and corruption, this doth not prove that particular lust and corruption to be habitually prevalent; for it may be a temptation. This may all proceed from the conjunction of temptation with indwelling sin, which will make it fight, and war, and use force, and lead captive.

But suppose a person be in that condition, how shall he know whether it be a temptation in conjunction with indwelling sin in general? Or, whether it be an habitual prevalency of a particular corruption?

I answer, *It is not from the prevalency of corruption these three ways.*

1. If the soul be more grieved with it, than defiled by it, it is a temptation, and not a lust habitually prevalent. In this case, when a heart is so solicited with any sin, sin and grace are both at work, and have their contrary aims. The aim of grace is to humble the soul, and the aim of sin to defile it. And the soul is so far defiled, as by the deceitfulness and solicitations of sin, consent is obtained.

Defilement



Defilement ariseth not from temptation, as active upon the mind; but from temptation, as admitted with consent: so far as it consents, whether by surprisal, or long solicitations, so far it is defiled. It is otherwise, if the soul be more grieved with it, than defiled by it.

2. It is so, when the soul can truly, and doth look upon that particular corruption, as its greatest and most mortal enemy. It is not soldiers who have ruined my estate, nor a disease that hath taken away my health, nor enemies who have ruined my name or opposed me; but this corruption, which is my great and mortal enemy. When the soul is truly under this apprehension, then it is to be hoped, it is the power of temptation; and not the prevalency of lust, or corruption.

3. It is so also, when a man maintains his warfare and his conflict with it constantly, especially in those two great duties of private prayer and meditation; which if once the soul be beat off from, it is driven out of the field, and sin is conqueror. But so long as a man maintains the conflict in the exercise of grace in those duties, I look upon it as a temptation, and not an habitual, prevalent lust.

II. I shall now proceed to shew when a corruption is habitually prevalent:

And here is a large field before me, but I shall only speak some few things.

1. When a man doth choose, or willingly embrace known occasions of his sin, that sin is habitually prevalent. There is no man that hath the common understanding of a Christian, and hath any corruption or lust working in him, but he knows what are the occasions that provoke it. No man unless he is profligately wicked can choose sin for sin's sake. But he who knows what are the occasions that stir up, excite, and draw forth any particular corruption, and doth choose them, or willingly embrace them, there is the habitual prevalency of sin to an high degree in the mind of that man, whosoever he be: for sin is to be rejected in the occasion of it, or it will never be refused in the power of it.

2. Let a man fear it is so, when he finds arguments against it to lose their force. No man is under the power of particular corruption, but will have arguments suggested to his mind from fear, danger, shame, ruin, against continuing under that corruption. When a man begins to find these arguments abate in their force, and have not that prevalency upon his mind, they have had, let him fear there is an habitual prevalency of his corruption.

3. When a man upon conviction is turned out of his course, but is not turned aside from his design, when he traverseth his way like the wild ass: *In her occasion who shall turn her aside?* If you meet her, or pursue her, you may turn her out of her way; but still she pursues her design. Men meet with strong convictions of sin, strong rebukes and reproofs; this a little puts them out of their way, but not from their design or inclination, the bent of their spirit lies that way still, and the secret language of their heart is, that it was free with me, to be as in former days. Certainly a corruption is habitually prevalent, if it seldom or never fails to act it self under opportunities and temptations. If a man who trades cheats every time he is able to do so, he hath covetousness in his heart. Or if a man whenever opportunity and occasion meet together to drink, doth it to excess; this is a sign of an habitual corruption, if he be not able to hold out scarce at any time against a concurrence of temptation and opportunity.

4. When the soul, if it will examine it self, will find it is gone from under the conduct of renewing grace, and is at the best but under the evidence of restraining grace. Believers are under the conduct of renewing grace, and I grant that sometimes, when under the power of corruption and temptation, even they have broken the rule of renewing grace, God will keep them in order by restraining grace, by fear of danger, shame, and infamy; by outward considerations set home upon the mind by the spirit of God, which keeps them off from sin; but this is but sometimes. But if a man finds his heart wholly got from under the rule of renewing grace, and that he hath no leading or conduct but restraining grace, his sin hath got the perfect victory over him; that is, he would sin on to the end of his life, were it not for fear of shame, danger, death, and hell; he is no longer acted by renewing grace, which is faith and love, faith working by love. A man who hath a spiritual understanding may examine himself, and find under what conduct he is.



5. Lastly, when there is a predominant will in sinning, then lust is habitually prevalent. Sin may entangle the mind, and disorder the affections, and yet not be prevalent; but when it hath laid hold upon the will, it hath the mastery.

It is so, when the soul can truly, and doth look upon that particular corruption, as its eternal and most mortal enemy. It is not soldiers who have ruined ruined my name or opposed me; but this corruption, which is my great and mortal enemy. When the soul is truly under this apprehension, then it is to be hoped, it is the way of recovery, and no recovery. I am also assured, that it is with it constantly, especially in those two great duties of private prayer and meditation; which if once the soul be put off from, it is driven out of the field, and sin is constant. I look upon it as a temptation, and not an habitual, prevalent lust.

## DISCOURSE IX.

II. I shall now proceed to shew, where a corruption is habitually prevalent. And here is a large field before me, but I shall speak some few things.

### QUESTION.

1. When a man doth choose, or willingly embrace known occasions of his sin, *whether lust or corruption habitually prevalent, be consistent with the truth of grace?*

### ANSWER.

This is a hard question, there are difficulties in it, and it may be it is not precisely to be determined. I am sure we should be wonderful careful what we say upon such a question, which determines the present and eternal condition of the souls of men.

Supposing we retain something of what was spoken in stating a lust or corruption to be habitually prevalent, because this is the foundation of our present enquiry, I shall bring what I have to say upon this question to a few heads, that they may be remembered.

I say then,  
*First*, It is the duty of every believer to take care, that this may never be his own case practically. We shall meet with freights enough, and fears enough, and doubts enough about our eternal condition, though we have no lust, nor corruption habitually prevalent. Therefore, I say, it is the duty of every believer to take care this may never be his case, *David did so, Psal. xix. 12, 13. Who can understand his errors? (saith he) Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins: then shall I be upright, and free from the great offence.* He acknowledges his errors and sins, and prays for cleansing, purifying, pardon; but for presumptuous sins, sins with an high hand, and every habitual corruption which hath something of presumption, *Lord, keep back thy servant from them*, saith he. The Apostle's caution is to the same purpose, *Heb. xii. 15. Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest a root of bitterness spring up.* There is the root of bitterness in every one, which I look upon as a corruption in some measure habitual, if it springs up unto great defilement. And I beseech you, brethren, beg of God for your own souls and mine, that we may be careful this be never our case.

*Secondly*, The second thing I would observe is this: whatever may be said concerning its consistency with Grace, it is certainly inconsistent with peace. I wish we would remember what description was given before of this prevalent corruption, that we might consider the things now applied unto it. Here though I would be as tender, as of the apple of mine eye, in these things, I will not fear to say this: that the peace which any one hath concurring with a prevalent corruption, is security, not peace. I know men may be at great peace under prevalent corruptions, and live upon good hopes, that they shall be accepted with God, that it shall be well with them in the latter end, and that they shall have power one time or other against this corruption, and will leave it when it is seasonable, and strive against it more than



they have done. But all such peace is but security! Under prevalent corruption there is a drawing back; for I would state the matter thus: a person who is a professor, and hath kept up to duties and obedience, till some lust hath gotten strength by constitution, temptations, or occasions of life, and hath drawn him off from his former renovation in walking with God; there is then a drawing back. Now, saith the Apostle, *If any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.* Heb. x. 38. And when God hath no pleasure according to the several degrees of backsliders (it may be that is meant of final apostasy.) He doth not intimate any thing that is a ground of peace to that soul. So *Isai. lviii. 17. For the iniquity of his covetousness I was wroth, and hid my self from him.* If there be an incurable iniquity of covetousness, or any other iniquity, whether manifest unto us or no, God is angry and doth hide himself from us. I pray, brethren, let us examine our peace; and if we find we have a peace that can maintain its ground and station under prevalent corruption, trust no more to that peace; it will not stand us in stead when it comes to a trial.

*Thirdly,* The third thing I would say is this, that if a prevalent corruption be not inconsistent with the truth of grace, it is certainly inconsistent with the true exercise of grace. It is not indeed inconsistent with the performance of duties, but it is inconsistent with the true exercise of grace in the performance of duties. It is often seen and known, that persons under prevalent corruption will multiply duties, thereby to quiet conscience, and to compensate God for what they have done amiss. Persons may multiply prayers, follow preaching, and attend to other duties, when they use all these things, through the deceitfulness of sin, but as a cloak unto some prevailing corruption. But in all those duties there is no true exercise of grace.

The true determination of this question depends upon a right exposition of *1 Joh. ii. 15.* if we could understand that *verse*, it determines this point. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* There is the question, whether prevalent corruption be inconsistent with true grace? I know the words may have this construction, If any man do make the world his chiefest good, if any man put the world in the place of God, then the love of the Father is not in him; he hath either received no love from God, or he hath no love to God; as a Father in Christ. But indeed, the Apostle speaking unto believers, I am apt to think, speaks not of the whole kind, but degrees: if there be a prevalency of love of the world, there is no prevalency of the actings of the love of the Father; that they do not concern the habitual principles of the love of the world, and of the love of the Father, but the prevailing actings of the one and the other. And accordingly it may be said of all other graces whatsoever, that where there is a prevalency of the acting of sin, there is a suspension of the exercise of grace. Brethren, if any of us have been under the power of prevalent corruption (I will be still tender, and speak what ought to be received and believed, whether people do or not) it is much to be feared, we have lost all our prayers and hearing, because we have not had a true exercise of grace in them. Some exercise there may be, but a due and true exercise of grace will be laid asleep by prevalent corruption. And therefore let us take heed of prevalent corruption, as we would take heed of losing all things that we have wrought, our praying, hearing, suffering, charity, for want of a due exercise of grace in them.

*Fourthly,* I shall grant this, that spiritual life may be in a swoon, when the spiritual man is not dead. There is a kind of *Deliquium* of the spirits, called swooning away, that may befall believers, which suspends all acts of life, when yet the man is not dead. So I say, though I should see a man through the prevalency of corruption have all the evidences of a spiritual life cast into a swoon, yet I will not presently conclude the spiritual man is dead. Take the case of *David*, from the time of his great fall and transgression in the matter of *Uriah*, until the coming of *Nathan* the prophet. Persons are generally inclined to believe that the spiritual life was in a swoon, when the spiritual man was not dead. His fall, as an honest man said, beat the breath out of his body, and he lay a long time like a man dead, by reason of that power, which one signal sin left in his soul. And take that as a great instance, that one sin, not immediately taken off by great humiliation,



liation, leaves great and even habitual inclinations in the soul to the same sin. So that some ascribed it unto the corruption of our nature. For it is a great and difficult question in divinity, how one particular sin, as the sin of *Adam* was, should bring in habitual corruption to our nature. To which some answer thus: that any one, single, moral act performed with an high hand, hath great obliquity in it, disposing our whole nature to corruption. *David* by that single act of flagrant wickedness did continue in it for so long a space of time, till *Nathan* came and administered some good spirits to him that relieved him out of his swoon. wherefore I say that I will not judge a person to be spiritually dead, whom I have judged formerly to have had spiritual life, though I see him at present in a swoon as to all evidences of the spiritual life. And the reason why I will not judge so, is this, because if you judge a person dead, you neglect him, you leave him; but if you judge him in a swoon, though never so dangerous, you use all means for the retrieving of his life. So ought we to do to one another, and our own souls.

*Fifthly*, There is a prevalency of sin that is inconsistent with true grace, which may befall those who have been professors. So the Apostle doth plainly declare, *Rom. vi. 16. Know ye not that to whom ye yield your selves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.* There is such a serving of sin, as puts a man into a contrary state.

*Sixthly*, I shall add but one thing more, and that is this, there may be a corruption, sin, or lust habitually prevalent as to whatsoever evidences the person in whom it is, or others can discern; and yet the root of the matter, the root of spiritual life be notwithstanding in the person.

Suppose then there be such a prevalency, that the soul judges to be habitual, how shall we know, whether the root of the matter be in such a person or no?

If the soul hath any thing left of spiritual life, there will be something of vital operations in that soul. Now the vital operations that give evidence the soul is not absolutely slain by prevalent corruption, are opposition, and humiliation. So long as the soul, though it be never so much captivated, is conscious to it self of a sincerity in the opposition it makes, there is an evidence of a vital operation, as likewise where it is constant in its humiliation on that account.

But if it be farther inquired how it may be known that this humiliation is sincere? I answer, it cannot be known from its vigour and efficacy; for that overthrows the question. For if the opposition was vigorous and effectual, it would break the power of lust and corruption, so that it would be no more prevalent. But two ways it may be known.

1. By its constancy. If the root of the matter be still in us, there will be a constant opposition to every act of any prevailing corruption whatsoever. I do not speak about violent temptations, but ordinary cases, in which I know not whence we should conclude the root of the matter is in that man, who doth not make a sincere opposition to every instance of the acting of prevalent corruption. If a man can pass over one and another instance of prevalent corruption without any humiliation for it, the holy sovereign God shew him grace and mercy; but it is to me the way of a serpent upon a stone, I see it not, I know it not.

2. It is sincere if it be from its proper spring, that is, if the opposition be not from conviction, light, or conscience only; but from the will of the poor sinner. I would do otherwise, I would have this sin destroyed, I would have it rooted out, that it should be no more in me, my will lies against it, however it hath captivated my affections, and disturbed my course.

This is all I dare say upon this question: that there may be an habitual prevalency of corruption which may seem so to them in whom it is, as also to those who converse with them, and yet the root of the matter be in them. We may know the root of the matter by the acting of spiritual life, in opposition going before, and humiliation coming after. We may know the sincerity of these vital actions by their constancy, and by their spring, if we are constant in them, and if they arise from our wills.

As the way of a serpent upon a stone, I see it not, I know it not. I would do otherwise, I would have this sin destroyed, I would have it rooted out, that it should be no more in me, my will lies against it, however it hath captivated my affections, and disturbed my course.



## \*DISCOURSE X.

### QUESTION.

**W**HAT shall a person do who finds himself under the power of a prevailing corruption, sin, or temptation?

### ANSWER.

I shall premise only this one thing, and then enquire whether it belongs to us, or no.

This prevalency hath many degrees. It may be a prevalency to outward scandal, or to the utter loss of inward peace, or to the disquieting and divesting of us of that tranquillity of mind, usually which Christ calleth us unto. Now pray consider, that I speak to it equally and in every degree. And perhaps there may be none of us, but at one time or other, after enquiry, will have had experience in one degree or other, either to disquietment, loss of peace, or scandal.

What shall such a person then do, who finds it so with him?

I answer,

*First*, He should labour to affect his mind with the danger of it. It is not conceivable how subtil sin is to shift off an apprehension of the danger of it. Notwithstanding this, says the man, yet I hope I am in a state of grace, and shall be saved, and come to the issue of it at one time or other: and so the mind keeps off a due sense of the danger of it. I beseech you, brethren and sisters, that if this be your condition, labour to affect your minds, that this state, as far as I know, will end in hell. And let not your minds be relieved from the apprehension, that upon due and good grounds of faith, these ways go down to the chambers of death. Don't please yourselves imagining you are members of the Church, and have good hopes of salvation by Jesus Christ; but consider whither this tends; and affect your minds with it.

*Secondly*, When the person is affected with the danger of it, the next thing to be done is, to burden his conscience with the guilt of it. For the truth is, as our minds are upon many pretences slow to apprehend the danger of sin; so our consciences are very unwilling to take the weight of the burden of it, as to its guilt. I speak not of men of scared consciences, that lay what weight you will upon them, will feel none; but even the consciences of renewed men, unless they use all the ways and means whereby conscience may be burdened, as by apprehensions of the holiness of God, of the law, of the love of Christ, and of all those things whereby conscience must be made to feel the weight of its guilt. No sooner doth it begin to be made a little sick with a sense of the guilt of sin, but it takes a cordial presently. Here this sin hath taken place, it hath contracted this and that guilt; I have been thus long negligent in this or that duty, I have thus long engaged in this and that folly, and been so given up unto the world; I must take to Christ by faith, or I am undone: it is afraid of making its load. But let conscience bear the burden, and not easily shift it off, unless it can, by true faith guided by the word, load it upon Christ, which is not a thing of course to be done.



*Thirdly*, What shall we do in case we have this apprehension of its danger, and can be thus burdened with its guilt? Pray for deliverance. How? You will say, There is in the Scriptures mention of *roaring*, Psal. xxxii. 3. The voice of my roaring. And likewise of *shouting*, Lam. iii. 3. *I shouted and cried*. This is a time to pray, that God would not hide his face from our roaring, nor shut out our prayers when we shout unto him; that is, to cry out with all the vigour of our souls. Christ is able to *succour* and help them that *make an outcry* to him. The word signifies so, and our word *succour*, signifies a running in to help a man who is ready to be destroyed. These may seem hard things to us, but it is a great thing to save our souls, and to deliver ourselves from the snares of Satan.

*Fourthly*, Treasure up every warning, and every word that you are convinced was pointed against your particular corruption. There is none of you who may have the power of particular corruptions, but God at one time or other in his providence or word, gives particular warning, that the soul may say, This is for me, I must comply with it: but *it is like a man that sees his face in a glass, and goes away, and immediately forgets what manner of man he was*: there is an end of it. But if God give you such warnings, set them down, treasure them up, lose them not, they must be accounted for. He that being often reproved, hardens his heart, shall perish suddenly, and that without remedy.

*Fifthly*, I shall mind you of two rules, and so have done.

1. In your perplexities, as to the power of sin, exercise faith, that notwithstanding all, you see and find that you are almost lost and gone, there is a power in God, through Christ, for the subduing and conquering of it.

2. It is in vain for any to think to mortify a prevailing sin, who doth not at the same time endeavour to mortify all sin, and to be found in every duty. Here is a person troubled and perplex'd with a temptation or corruption, both are the same in this case: he cries, O, that I were delivered; I had rather have deliverance than life; I will do my endeavour to watch against it. But it may be this person will not come up to a constancy in secret prayer; he will go up and down, and wish himself free, but will not be brought up to such duties wherein those lusts must be mortified. Therefore take this rule along with you; never hope to mortify any corruption whereby your hearts are grieved, unless you labour to mortify every corruption by which the spirit of God is grieved; and be found in every duty, especially those under which grace thrives and flourishes.

## DISCOURSE XI.

### QUESTION.

**W**HAT is our duty with respect to dark and difficult dispensations of God's providence in the world?

### ANSWER.

In answer unto this question, three things are to be considered.

*First*, What are, in a Scripture sense, those things that make a season of providence dark and difficult?

*Secondly*, What are the open signs of the coming and passing of such a season over us? And,

*Thirdly*,



*Thirdly*, What are our special duties in reference to our entering into, and passing through such a season?

*First*, What are those things that make a season of providence dark and difficult?

I find four things in Scripture that make a dark season of providence; and if I mistake not, they are all upon us.

1. The long continued prosperity of wicked men. This you are sensible is the most known case of all the Old Testament, *Psal. lxxiii.* *Jer. xlii. 1, 2, 3.* *Hab. ii. 4, 13,* and many other places. The holy men of old did confess themselves in great perplexity at the long continued prosperity of wicked men, and their long continued prosperity in ways of wickedness. Give but this one farther circumstance to it, the long continued prosperity of wicked men, in their wickedness, when the light shines round about them to convince them of that wickedness, and God speaks in and by the light of his word against them, that is a trial. When all things were wrapped up in darkness and idolatry, it is no wonder at the patience of God; but when things come in any place to that state, that many continue prosperous in wickedness when the day is upon them that judges them, it is a difficulty.

2. It is a difficult season of providence, when the Church is continued under persecution and distress in a time of prayer, when they give themselves to prayer. The difficulty seems mentioned, *Psal. lxxx. 4.* *O Lord, how long wilt thou smoke against the prayer of thy people?* This made it hard, that God should afflict his Church, and keep her under distresses, and suffer the furrows to be made long upon her back, and continue her under oppression from one season to another, there may be evident reason for that. But, saith God, Call upon me in the time of trouble, and I will hear. God hath promised to hear the Church. *Will not God avenge the elect that call upon him day and night? He will do it speedily.* Now when God seems to be angry with the prayers of his people, that is a difficult season: when they cry and shout and God shuts out their prayers, that makes a dark providence.

As the other difficulty is evidently upon us; so I hope we have this difficulty to conflict withal, that the anger of God continues to smoke against the prayers of his people, as having stirred up many a blessed cry to himself, for there is a time when he will hear and answer their prayers.

3. It is a dark and difficult dispensation of providence, when the world, and nations of the world are filled with confusion and blood, and no just reason appearing why it should be so. When our Saviour foretels a difficult season, *Matth. xxiv.* and *Luke xxi.* he says, There shall be terrible times, such as never were; nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be wars, bloodshed, and earthquakes; and the very elect shall hardly escape. Therefore God calls such a time, a day of darkness, yea, of thick darkness, *Joel ii. 2.* A dark gloomy day. There is nothing to be seen in all the confusions that are in the world at this day, but that the frogs of unclean spirits are gone forth to stir up the lusts of men to make havock of one another.

4. It adds greatly to the difficulty of a season, when we have no prospect whither things are tending, and what will be their issue.

There are two ways whereby we may have a prospect of things that are in being: By the eye of God's providence, when we perceive which way that looks: And by Scripture rule. The truth is, we are in a time wherein no man can discern a fixed eye of providence looking this way or that way. What will be the issue of these things; whether it will be the deliverance of the Church, or the desolation of the nation and streightning of the Church; whether God will bring good out of them in this generation, or any other time, none knows: this makes it difficult. *Psal. lxxiv. 9.* *We see not our signs,* [have no tokens what God intends to do] *neither is there among us any to tell us how long.*

There is none of these things but make a season difficult, and providence dark, but when all of them concur together, they can't but greatly heighten it: and I think they are all upon us.

*Secondly*, What are the open signs of the coming and passing of such a season over us?

There are three tokens or outward evidences of a difficult season. It is so,

1. When God's patience is abused. You know that place, *Eccles. viii. 11.* *Because judgment is not speedily executed upon an evil work, therefore the heart of the sons*



*sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* Things pass thus; men fall into wickedness, great wickedness; their consciences fly in their faces, and they are afraid; the power of their lusts carry them into the same wickedness again, and their consciences begin to grow a little colder than they were; no evil comes of it; and judgment is not speedily executed; and so their hearts at last come to be wholly set to do evil. Hence others that look on say, here are men given up to all wickedness, surely judgment will speedily come upon these men; judgment doth not come, God is patient, and so they themselves turn as wicked as the former. Abusing of God's patience is an evident sign of a dispensation of the displeasure of God in his providence: and if ever it was upon any, it is upon us, and men learn it more and more every day. Every one talks of other mens sins, and seeing no judgment falls upon them, they give up themselves to the same sins.

It is so when God's warnings are despised. *When thine hand is lifted up, they will not see.* That is a difficult season, for, saith God, *The fire of thine adversaries shall consume them.* Never had people more warnings than we have had; warnings in heaven above, and warning on the earth beneath; warnings by lesser judgments, and warnings by greater; and warnings by the word. God's hand hath been lifted up, but who takes notice of it? Some despise it, and others talk of it as a tale to be told, and there is an end of it. Who sanctifies the name of God in all the warnings that are given us? *The Lord's voice crieth unto the city,* Micah vi. 9. but it is only *the man of wisdom*, of substance, that seeth the name of God in these his cries unto the city by his warnings from heaven and earth, signs and tokens, and great intimations of his displeasure.

3. An inclination in all sorts of people to security, and to take no notice of these things. I have spoken unto this business of security formerly, and I pray God warn you and myself of it; for I believe none of us are such strangers to our hearts, but we can say, that under all these warnings there is an inclination to security; if God did not prevent it, we should fall fast asleep under all the judgments that are round about us.

Any of these things shew that we are under a difficult dispensation of providence; but where all concur, God be merciful to such a people: it is the opening of the door to let out judgments to the uttermost.

Now if this be such a season, as I do verily believe we are all sensible it is; then,

Thirdly, What shall we do? What are our special duties in reference to our entering into, and passing through such a season?

I might speak unto the peculiar exercise of those graces which are required unto such a season; as faith, resignation to the will of God, readiness for his pleasure, waiting upon God, weanedness from the world, and the like; but I will only give you three or four duties, which are peculiarly hinted in such a season, and so have done.

1. Our first duty is, that we should meet together, and confer about these things, *Mal. iii. 16, 17.* A good place in difficult seasons, such as some of us have seen. The day of the Lord was coming that would burn as an oven: *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.* When was this? In a time of great judgment, and great sin: *When they called the proud happy, and they that wrought wickedness were set up, and they that tempted God were even delivered:* that is, *appeared to be delivered.* It is the great duty of us all, as we have opportunity and occasion, to confer about these things; about the causes of them; what ariseth from the prophane, wicked world; what from a persecuting, idolatrous world; and (whertin we are more concerned) what from a professing generation; and see how we can sanctify the name of God in it. We might have as great advantages as any under the face of heaven for the discharge of this duty, if we did but make use of that prize which God hath put into our hands; but if we are fools and have no heart to improve it, the blame will be our own. You have opportunities for meeting and assembling; I fear there are cold affections in your private meetings, I wish there be not. It may be some thrive and grow; I hope so: and others are

cold



cold and backward, it is not a season for it. If God would help us to manage this Church aright and as we ought to do, there can be no greater advantage under such a season, than we enjoy; but we want voluntary inspection; and the Lord lay it not to our charge we have deferred it so long. Much want of love might have been prevented, many duties furthered, and many evils removed, if we had come up to the light God hath given to us. But we are at a loss, and God knows we suffer under it for want of discharging our duty.

That is the first thing, to speak often one to another; to sanctify the name of God by an humble, diligent enquiry into the causes of these dispensations, and preparation for these things.

2. The second duty in such a season, is privately for every one of us to enquire of Jesus Christ in prayer and supplication, what shall be the end of these things; you have a great instance of it, *Dan. viii. 13, 14. Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.* I suppose there is something of the ministry of angels in it; for this saint enquires, but the answer is made to Daniel: *One saint said unto another saint, and he said unto me.* But the speaking saint was Jesus Christ. There was the holy One that spake, which he calls *וְיִסְכֵּן* a certain saint; but the derivation of the word is, *One that revealeth secrets.* There was application made unto Jesus Christ, who is the revealer of secrets, to know, how long. And you will find in the Scriptures, in difficult dispensations, that is very many times the request of the saints to God: how long? *Dan. xii. 6, 8. How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?* There is an humble application by faith and prayer unto Jesus Christ to know the mind of God in these things, that will bring satisfaction into our souls. Do not leave your selves to wander in your own thoughts and imaginations. It is impossible but we shall be debating things, and giving a rational account of them; but all will not bring us satisfaction. But let us go to Jesus Christ, and say to him: *O Lord, how long?* And he will give in secret satisfaction to our souls.

This is the second thing: frequently confer about these things; and press Jesus Christ to give your souls satisfaction as to these dispensations. And then,

3. Another peculiar duty, required in such a season, is to mourn for the sins that are in the world. That is recommended to us, *Ezek. ix.* When God had given commission unto the sword to slay both old and young, he spared only them that mourned for the abominations that were done in the land. We come short in our duty in that matter, in being affected with the sins of the worst of men. God being dishonoured, the spirit of God blasphemed, the name of God reproached in them; we ought to mourn for their abominations. We mourn for the sins among God's people, but we ought also to mourn for those abominations others are guilty of; for their idolatries, murders, bloodshed, uncleanness, for all the abominations that the lands about us, as well as our own, are filled with. It is our duty in such a season to mourn for them, or we do not sanctify the name of God, and shall not be found prepared for those difficult dispensations of God's providence, which are coming upon us.

4. The fourth and last peculiar duty, which I shall mention, is to hide our selves. And how shall we do that? The storm is coming, get an ark, as Noah did; when the flood was coming upon the world, which is stated for a precedent of all judgments in future times.

There are two things required to provide an ark; fear, and faith.

(1.) Fear: *By faith Noah being moved with fear prepared an ark.* If he had not been moved with the fear of God's judgments, he would never have provided an ark. It is a real complaint, we are not moved enough with a fear of God's judgments. We talk of dreadful things, as can befall human nature, and expect them every day; but yet we are not moved with fear. *Yet were they not afraid, saith Jeremiah, nor rent their garments.* Nor do we do so. *Habakkuk, upon the view of God's judgments, was in another frame, chap. iii. 16. When I heard, saith he, my belly trembled: my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in my self that I might rest in the day of trouble.* This is the



way to find rest in the day of God's judgments; we are afraid of being esteemed cowards for fearing God's judgments. And then;

(2.) We cannot well provide an ark for our selves; unless we be guided by faith, as well as moved by fear. *By faith Noah prepared an ark.* How many things there are to encourage faith, you have heard; the name, the properties of God, and the accomplishment of the promise of God. By virtue of all those properties encourage faith in providing an ark.

But you will say, we are yet at a loss, what this providing of an ark, and hiding of our selves is. *A prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself.* God calls us to enter into the chamber of providence, and hide our selves till the indignation be over past. If we knew what this was, we should apply our selves unto it, I will tell you what I think in one instance: give no quiet to your minds, until by some renewed act of faith you have a strong and clear impression of the promises of God upon your hearts, and of your interest in them. If it be but one promise, it will prove an ark. If under all these seasons, moved with fear, acted by faith, we can but get a renewed sense and pledge of our interest in any one promise of God, we have an ark over us that will endure, whatever the storm be. Think of it, and if nothing else occur to you, apply your minds to it, that you may not wander up and down at uncertainties; but endeavour to have a renewed pledge of your interest in some special promise of God, that it belongs unto you, and it will be an ark in every time of trouble that shall befall you.

## \*DISCOURSE XII.

**I** Did at two meetings enquire among our selves, what was required in the time of approaching judgments and calamities that the world hath been, and is like to be filled withal. And God was pleased to guide us to the discovery of the necessary exercise of many graces, and the necessary attendance unto many duties for that end and purpose. And we did design to spend our time this day, to beg that God would give us those graces, and stir them up by his spirit unto a due exercise; and that he would help us unto such a performance of those duties, that when the Lord Christ shall come by any holy dispensation of his providence, we may be found of him in peace. That was the especial occasion of allotting the present time unto this duty; no ways excluding the reasons, occasions, and matter of prayer, which at other times we attend to for our selves, the Church, and the nation.

I would offer a few words that may stir us up unto this duty.

The Scripture doth every where, upon all such occasions, call expressly unto us for a special preparation by the exercise of grace in reformation and holiness. *Judgment must begin at the house God:* and what will be the end of them *that obey not the Gospel?* What then is our duty? Why, saith he, *seeing that all these things shall be dissolved* [all this outward frame of things] *what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* Brethren! we ought at all times to attend unto all holy conversation and godliness; but, saith the Apostle, the



approach of judgment is a peculiar motive thereunto: *seeing that all these things are to be dissolved.* It is true, seeing Christ hath died for us, washed us in his blood, and given his holy spirit unto us; *What manner of persons ought we to be?* But the great motives are not exclusive of occasional exercises, but give an addition unto them. *Take heed that you be not overtaken with surfeiting and drunkenness,* with any excess in the use of the creature. What if it be so? *Then that day will come upon you at unawares.* The day when all shall be dissolved; the day of judgment, the day of approaching calamities. You ought at all times to take care of these things, but if your minds are not influenced in the consideration of the approach of that day, *you are not my disciples.* I do not at all speak unto what preparations are required.

I could also reflect on those places, where God expresseth his great displeasure against such, who did not labour for a peculiar preparation upon approaching calamities. *Isai. xxii. 12, 13, 14. I called for mourning, and fasting, and girding with sackcloth;* and you betook your selves unto feasting on all occasions: *Surely, saith the Lord, this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die.* And it is reckoned among the sins of the most profligate persons, that when God's hand is lifted up, and ready to strike, they will not see; so as to learn righteousness, *Isai. xxvi. 11.*

Let us therefore beg for grace. Though God multiplieth warnings, makes appearances of mercy, and then writes death upon them, and entangles every thing in darkness; yet our work goes slowly on in preparation. Cry earnestly unto God for such supplies of his grace and spirit, that may effectually bring us unto him; that we may no longer abide in the frame wherein we are.

There are three things, and no more, that I know of (others may be named, but they may be reduced unto these three heads) that are required of us in reference unto approaching judgments. And there is not one of them through which we can pass, or which we can perform in a due manner comfortably unto our selves, and unto the glory of God, without we have some singular and eminent preparation for it. And they are these,

*First,* That we our selves stand in the gap to turn away the threatened judgments.

*Secondly,* That we may be fit for deliverance, if it please the Lord graciously to give it unto us, saith Christ, speaking of great calamities; *Lift up your heads, for the day of your salvation draws nigh.*

*Thirdly,* That we may cheerfully and comfortably go through the calamities, if they shall overtake us.

These three are comprehensive of all the threats of approaching judgments and darkness that encompass us at this day. Now there is not one of them that we can be any way fit for, unless our hearts and lives are brought into an extraordinary preparation, according as God calls and requires. I do not know whether we believe these things, or no, but they will be shortly found to be true.

*First,* Who dares among us to propose himself to stand in the gap, to divert judgments from the nation, otherwise than in a formal manner, who is not prepared by these things we have spoken of, and hath not some good and comfortable persuasion of his own personal interest in Christ, and hath not freed himself from those sins that have procured these judgments, and who lives not in a resignation of himself unto the will of God? Who dares to do this? We shall provoke God, if we think to stand in the gap, and turn away judgments from the nation; when we our selves are concerned in procuring those judgments.

*Secondly,* We cannot be meet for deliverance, unless we are thus prepared. I have heard a notion preached, and spoken upon other occasions, which I confess I never liked; and the more I consider it, the more I dislike it; and that is, that God in the deliverance of his people works for his own name sake, that he may have all the glory, that it shall be seen merely to be of grace; and therefore he will oftentimes deliver his people, when they are in an unreformed and unreforming condition, that he may shame them and humble them by his mercy and grace afterwards. I know no rule of Scripture upon which this notion may be grounded, nor one instance or example whereby it may be made out.

Here



Here lies the truth of it: when there are two things concurring in the deliverance of the Church, God will deliver them notwithstanding all their sins and unworthiness, without any previous humiliation in themselves. *First*, when God hath fixed and limited a certain season in his word and promise for their deliverance. And *secondly*, when antecedent unto their deliverance they cannot want means for humiliation. God delivered the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, when they were in a very bad condition, an ignorant, stubborn, faithless generation. But both these things were concurring. God was engaged in point of his promise, that at the end of four hundred and thirty years he would visit and deliver them. And they were deprived of all ordinances of worship in *Egypt*: not a sacrifice could they offer, while they were there; not a sabbath, I believe, though it is not expressed in Scripture, could they observe. The way of worship and knowledge of God was taken from them. So when God delivered the children of *Israel* out of *Babylon*, they were in no very good condition; but God was engaged in point of promise as to that time, that at the end of seventy years they should be delivered. And in *Babylon* they had no means for instruction or reformation, no temple, no sacrifice, these were denied. But whenever God doth afford unto persons all the means of grace for humiliation, reformation, and turning unto himself, it may be as good as ever they shall in this world; that God did ever deliver that people out of their distresses, when they refused to be reformed, humbled, or to turn unto him, neither instances of Scripture, nor God's dealing with his Church will make this good. Therefore it is vain for us to expect any thing of this nature. If indeed for so many years we had been thrown into a wilderness condition, and had no preaching, no assemblies, no administration of ordinances, no warnings or charges from God; we might have expected the Lord would have given us deliverance. But to us who have had all these things, and yet will not make use of what we have now at present, we have no ground to expect any such thing. Therefore, I confess, neither by rule, instance or example, do I expect deliverance, until God come in to work a thorough change and reformation in our hearts and lives, which makes it very necessary to be preparing to meet God in the way of his judgments.

*Thirdly*, The third thing that may lie before us is, how we may chearfully go through the calamities which may overtake us. I will say no more unto that, because it is that which we did expressly insist upon in our former discourse. As to the best of us, who have been long in the ways of God, woful will be our surprisal, when the days of calamity come, if we have lived in negligence of complying with the calls and warnings of God, that we have had, to bring ourselves unto a more even and better frame. We shall find our strength to fail us, and have our comforts to seek; and be left to inward darkness, when outward darkness encreaseth, and not know whither to cause our sorrows to go.

These things, brethren, I thought fit to mention unto you, that, if it be the will of God, they may be of use to take us off from those false hopes, and false expectations, which we are wonderfully ready to feed ourselves withal in such a day as this is wherein we live. It is high time for us to be calling upon God for this end.

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## DISCOURSE XII.

THE prophet *Daniel* tells us, when he understood by books, namely, the writings of the prophet *Jeremiah*, that the time wherein the great contest between *Babylon* and the Church was to have its issue, was come to a point; Then, saith he, *I set my face to seek the Lord with prayer, and supplications, and fasting.* And if you will read his prayer, you will find nothing of confidence, nothing of selfascription, but a deep acknowledgment of sin: *We, our kings, our princes, our fathers, our Church, have all sinned; so as that to us belongeth shame, and confusion of face.* And never had such shame and confusion of face befallen the Church, as would have befallen them, if they had been disappointed in that trial. But he adds, *unto thee belongs mercy and forgiveness.* There he issues the whole business, upon mercy and forgiveness, though he knew by books that the time was come.

Truly, brethren, we do not know by any Scripture revelation, as he did, that the time is come wherein the long contest and conflict between *Babylon* and the Church will have its issue; but it looks like it in the book of providence, and so like it, that it is a plain duty we should give ourselves unto prayer and supplication, that it do not issue in shame and confusion of face, which belongeth unto us by reason of our sins. It is that contest which is now under consideration, and which seems to be coming to its issue, and all men are in expectation of it. It is the greatest, save one, that ever was. For the greatest contest that ever was in this world, was between the person and the Gospel of Christ on the one hand; and the Devil and the pagan world on the other. And the next to that is the contest between Christ in his offices and grace, in his Gospel and worship; and antichrist. And it is at this day upon its trial, in as signal an instance as ever it received. The question is, as to us and our posterity; whether Christ, or antichrist; whether the worship of God, or of idols; whether the effusion, and waiting for the effusion of the spirit of God in his worship, or for all manner of superstitious impositions. This is the present contest; and it may be under heaven there never was a more signal instance of the issue of this contest, than will be in these nations in these days; I do not say presently or speedily, but this you all know is our state.

I mention it only to let you know, that there is more than an ordinary earnestness and fervency of spirit, and wrestling with God required of us at this day, for the case of *Zion*, the interest of Christ, and defeating of his adversaries. What way God will work we know not. If he be at work, he hath said, that when a flood was cast out of the mouth of the dragon, to swallow up the woman every where (and we have had a flood cast out of the mouth of the dragon to swallow up the whole interest of Christ in this nation) the earth lifted up herself, and helped the woman, and turned aside the flood. Good old *El*'s heart trembled for the ark of God. The interest of God, and the truths of Christ are yet among us; but hardly beset by the *Philistines*: and whether they may not take them I know not, God only knows. But assuredly, brethren, our hearts ought now to tremble for the ark of God, that God would continue it among us, and not give his glory into the hands of the adversary.

I have mentioned these things, only for this end, that if God will, our hearts may be a little warmed upon all occasions in this great contest and conflict between Christ and antichrist, to come in with our prayers to the help of the Lord, and of the ark of the Lord, that we may see a blessed issue of this trial, and not be covered with that shame and confusion of face which belongeth unto us.



## \* DISCOURSE XIV.

**T**HIS meeting is for conference, and I would ask you a few questions.

*First*, Whether do you think there are extraordinary calls and warnings of God towards this nation at this time?

*Secondly*, If there be, what is the voice of these calls? Whether repentance and reformation be not that which God speaketh in these extraordinary calls?

*Thirdly*, Whether any sort of men, believers, or Churches, are exempted from attending unto, and complying with these calls of God? For there lies a reserve in our hearts. The nation is very wicked (I shall not repeat the sins of the nation) the warning is general to the nation, the body of the people, and God testifies his displeasure against them. Now the enquiry is, whether there be any rule, that we, who profess ourselves believers, and a Church, should count ourselves exempted from a particular compliance with these extraordinary calls of God, that they are for others, and not for us? *If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent*, Job ix. 23. And the good figs went first into captivity.

*Fourthly*, What have we done hitherto in order to it, that may evidence itself to be an answer to a compliance with these calls of God, which we have owned here before the Lord? We have been speaking of it, and it becomes me to judge that we have had good and sincere desires after it. And neither the Church, nor any one in the Church shall have any reflections from me beyond evidence. It becomes me to judge, that we have had in ourselves good intentions, and sincere endeavours after it; though they have been, it may be, no way suitable or proportionable to the present occasion: and therefore I must say, that in an eminent and extraordinary manner, as yet, we have done nothing; we have not consulted of it yet, what we should do, and *what it is* in particular *that the Lord our God requireth of us*; nor declared our designs and intentions for an universal compliance with these great calls of God, for repentance and turning unto the Lord. I mourn over myself night and day, I mourn over you continually. I do not see that life and vigour in returning unto God, either in our persons, or in our Church relation, as I could desire. And give me leave to say from an experience in my own heart, I am jealous over you. We may proceed to consider something of outward duties afterwards; but as yet we are not at all come to it, but only to enquire into our hearts what we have done in compliance with these calls of God in the reformation and change of our hearts, and vigour of spirit in walking with him. I speak it with all tenderness, that none might take offence; but I do acknowledge to you, that I have not myself attained, nor can I, though I am labouring to bring my heart to that frame, which God requireth in us all at this time: I find many obstructions: if you have attained, I shall rejoice in it with all my heart and soul; but if not, help them that are labouring after it. I intend no more at present but this, to settle upon our souls a conviction that we have not as yet answered the calls of God in the heart; for if we have all apprehensions we have complied, the work is at an end.

I hope we may in due time go on to consider all the ways and instances whereby we may reform and return to God; but in the mean time I offer this to you, that unless the foundation of it be laid in a deep and broken sense of our past miscarriages and present frames, and I can see in the Church some actings of a renewed spirit with vigour and earnestness to pursue our recovery and return to



God, I shall much despond in this thing. But let us be persuaded that we are to lay this foundation, I desire we may agree upon this, that it is our duty to get a deep sense upon our hearts (as the first thing God aims at in his calls) of our past miscarriages, and of our present dead, wretched frame, in comparison of that vigour, liveliness, and activity of grace that ought to be found in us. Ought we not to lay the foundation here? If so, then we ought to apply our selves unto it. It may be, though it be so with some, that they have such a lively, vigorous acting of faith in a deep and humble sense of their past miscarriages, yet it is not so with others; and we are looking for the edification of the whole. And therefore, brethren, do we judge it our present duty to labour to affect our hearts deeply with a sense of our present unanswerable frame unto the mind of God and Christ, and of our past miscarriages?

If it be so, let us every day pray, that God would keep this thing in the imagination of the thoughts of our hearts, not only of our selves, but of one another. Observe the phrase of the holy Ghost: when you come to *the thoughts of the heart*, you think you can go no farther; but saith David, I pray, O Lord, preserve this *in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people*: that is, in the first internal framing of our thoughts. There must be a frame acting and coining thoughts (if I may so say) continually in us to this purpose. But I recommend this to you, that if this be a truth, and we are convinced it is our duty to labour to affect our hearts with a sense of the unanswerableness of our souls, and the frame of our minds into the will of God and the holiness of Christ, who is coming to visit his Churches, *What manner of persons ought we to be?* Not such as we have been. We should labour for a deep sense of this, and I hope it may not be unsuitable unto you; for if any of us have any corruption, temptation, or disorder in our spirits and ways to conflict withal, in vain, believe me, shall we contend against it, unless we lay this foundation.

I know one great means for the beginning, and carrying on of this work, is by earnest crying unto God by prayers and supplications, and humiliations. I am loath to issue it there, I have seen so many days of humiliation without reformation, that I dare not issue it there, we shall make use of them as God shall help us. I desire the Church would do so, if they find in themselves a sense of duty and a heart crying to God in sincerity and truth. I have now been very long, though very unprofitable, in the ministration of the word; and I have observed the beginning of Churches, and wish I do not see the end of them in this their confidence of mere profession, and the observation of these duties of humiliation. God knows, I have thought often of this thing, and, I say, I dare not issue it there. Let us have as many as we have hearts for, and no more; and as many as shall end with reformation, but no more. But let us all begin among our selves; and who knows but that God may give wisdom to this Church? I am ready to faint, and give over, and to beg of the Church, they would think of some other person to conduct them in my room without these disadvantages. The last day will discover I have nothing but an heart to lead you in the ways of God to the enjoyment of God.





OF  
MARRYING after DIVORCE  
IN CASE OF  
ADULTERY.

**I**T is confessed by all, that adultery is a just and sufficient cause of a divorce betwixt married persons.

This divorce, say some, consists in a dissolution *vinculi matrimonialis*, and so removes the marriage relation, as that the innocent person divorcing, or procuring the divorce, is at liberty to marry again.

Others say, that it is only a separation *a mensa & thoro*, and that on this occasion, it doth not, nor ought to dissolve the marriage relation.

I am of the judgment of the former. For,

*First*, This divorce *a mensa & thoro* only is no true divorce, but a mere fiction of a divorce, of no use in this case, nor lawful to be made use of, neither by the law of nature, nor the law of God. For,

1. It is, as stated, but a late invention of no use in the world, nor known in more antient times. For those of the *Roman Church*, who assert it, do grant that divorces by the law of nature were *a vinculo*; and that so they were also under the Old Testament: and this fiction they would impose on the grace and state of the Gospel; which yet makes indeed no alteration in moral relations, or duties, but only directs their performance.

2. It is deduced from a fiction, namely, that marriage among Christians is a *sacrament* of that signification, as renders it indissoluble. And therefore they would have it to take place only amongst believers, the rest of mankind being left to their natural right and privilege. But this is a fiction, and as such in sundry cases they make use of it.

*Secondly*, A divorce perpetual *a mensa & thoro* only, is no way useful to mankind, but hurtful and noxious. For,



1. It would constitute a new condition, or state of life, wherein it is not possible that a man should either have a wife, or not have a wife, lawfully. In one of which estates yet really every man, capable of the state of wedlock, is and must be, whether he will or no. For a man may, as things may be circumstantiated, be absolutely bound in conscience not to receive her again, who was justly repudiated for adultery. Nor can he take another on this divorce. But into this estate God calls no man.

2. It may, and probably will cast a man under a necessity of sinning. For suppose he hath not the gift of continency, it is the express will of God, that he should marry for his relief. Yet on this supposition he sins, if he does so; and in that, he sins if he doth not so.

*Thirdly*, It is unlawful. For if the bond of marriage abideth, the relation still continues. This relation is the foundation of all mutual duties. And whilst all that continues, none can dispense with, or prohibit from the performance of those duties. If a woman do continue in the relation of a wife to a man, she may claim the duties of marriage from him. Separation there may be by consent for a season, or upon other occasions, that may hinder the actual discharge of conjugal duties; but to make an obligation unto such duties void, whilst the relation doth continue, is against the law of nature, and the law of God. This divorce therefore, supposing the relation of man and wife between any, and no mutual duty thence to arise, is unlawful.

*Fourthly*, The light of nature never directed to this kind of divorce. Marriage is an ordinance of the law of nature; but in the light and reason thereof, there is no intimation of any such practice. It still directed, that they who might justly put away their wives, might marry others. Hence some, as the ancient *Grecians*, and the *Romans* afterwards, allowed the husband to kill the adulterers. This among the *Romans* was changed *Lege Julia*, but the offence still made capital. In the room hereof afterwards divorce took place, purposely to give the innocent person liberty of marriage. So that this kind of divorce is but a fiction.

The first opinion therefore is according to truth. For, *First*, That which dissolves the form of marriage, and destroys all the forms of marriage, doth dissolve the bond of marriage. For take away the form and end of any moral relation, and the relation it self ceaseth. But this is done by adultery, and a divorce ensuing thereon. For the form of marriage consisteth in this, that *two become one flesh*, Gen. ii. 24. *Matth.* xix. 6. But this is dissolved by adultery: for the adulterers becometh one flesh with the adulterer, *I Cor.* vi. 16. and so no longer one flesh in individual society with her husband. And it absolutely breaks the bond or covenant of marriage. And how can men contend that is a bond which is absolutely broken? or fancy a *vinculum* that doth not bind? And, that it absolutely destroys all the forms of marriage, will be granted. It therefore dissolves the bond of marriage it self.

*Secondly*, If the innocent party upon a divorce be not set at liberty, then

1. He is deprived of his right by the sins of another, which is against the law of nature; and so every wicked woman hath it in her power to deprive her husband of his natural right.

2. The divorce in case of adultery, pointed by our Saviour to the innocent person to make use of, is, as all confess, for his liberty, advantage, and relief. But on supposition, that he may not marry, it would prove a snare, and a yoke unto him. For if hereon he hath not the gift of continency, he is exposed to sin and judgment.

*Thirdly*, Our blessed Saviour gives express direction in the case, *Matth.* xix. 9. *Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.* Hence it is evident, and is the plain sense of the words, that he *who putteth away his wife for fornication, and marrieth another, doth not commit adultery.* Therefore the bond of marriage in that case is dissolved, and the person that put away his wife, is at liberty to marry. While he denies putting away and marrying again for every cause, the exception of fornication allows both putting away, and marrying again in that case. For an exception always affirms the contrary unto what is denied in the rule, whereunto it is an exception; or, denies what is affirmed in it, in the case comprised in the exception.









OF  
**INFANT BAPTISM**  
 AND  
**DIPPING.**

OF INFANT BAPTISM.

I. **T**HE question is not, whether professing believers, *Jews* or *Gentiles*, not baptized in their infancy, ought to be baptized? For this is by all confessed.

II. Neither is it, whether in such persons the profession of saving faith, and repentance ought not to go before baptism? This we plead for, beyond what is the common practice of those who oppose us.

Wherefore testimonies produced out of authors, antient or modern, to confirm these things, which consist with the doctrine of infant baptism, are mere tergiversations, that belong not to this cause at all; and so are all arguments produced unto that end out of the Scriptures.

III. The question is not, whether all infants are to be baptized, or not? For according to the will of God some are not to be baptized; even such, whose parents are strangers from the covenant. But hence it will follow, that some are to be baptized: seeing an exception confirms both rule and right.

IV. The question is only concerning the children, or infant seed of professing believers, who are themselves baptized. And,

*First,*



*First,* They by whom this is denied, can produce no testimony of Scripture, wherein their negation is formally, or in terms included, nor any one asserting what is inconsistent with the affirmative: for it is weak beneath consideration to suppose, that the requiring of the baptism of believers, is inconsistent with that of their seed. But this is to be required of them, who oppose infant baptism, that they produce such a testimony.

*Secondly,* No instance can be given from the Old or New Testament, since the days of *Abraham*; none from the approved practice of the primitive Church, of any person or persons born of professing, believing parents, who were themselves made partakers of the initial seal of the covenant, being then in infancy, and designed to be brought up in the knowledge of God, who were not made partakers with them of the same sign and seal of the covenant.

*Thirdly,* A spiritual privilege once granted by God unto any, cannot be changed, disannulled, or abrogated without an especial, divine revocation of it, or the substitution of a greater privilege and mercy in the room of it. For,

1. Who shall disannul what God hath granted? What he hath put together, who shall put asunder? To abolish, or take away any grant of privilege made by him to the Church, without his own express revocation of it, is to deny his sovereign authority.

2. To say, a privilege so granted may be revoked, even by God himself, without the substitution of a greater privilege and mercy in the room of it, is contrary to the goodness of God, his love and care unto his Church; contrary to his constant course of proceeding with it from the foundation of the world, wherein he went on in the enlargement, and encrease of its privileges, until the coming of Christ. And to suppose it under the Gospel, is contrary to all his promises, the honour of Christ, and a multitude of express testimonies of Scripture.

Thus was it with the privileges of the temple, and the worship of it granted to the *Jews*; they were not, they could not be taken away without an express revocation, and the substitution of a more glorious, spiritual temple, and worship in their room.

But now the spiritual privileges of a right unto, and a participation of the initial seal of the covenant was granted by God unto the infant seed of *Abraham*, *Gen. xvii. 10.*

This grant therefore must stand firm for ever, unless men can prove or produce, (1.) An express revocation of it by God himself, which none can do either directly, or indirectly, in terms or any pretence of consequence.

(2.) An instance of a greater privilege, or mercy granted unto them in the room of it; which they do not once pretend unto, but leave the seed of believers whilst in their infant state, in the same condition with those of pagans and infidels, expressly contrary to God's covenant.

All this contest therefore is to deprive the children of believers of a privilege once granted to them by God, never revoked as to the substance of it, assigning nothing in its room, which is contrary to the goodness, love, and covenant of God, especially derogatory to the honour of *Jesus Christ* and the Gospel.

*Fourthly,* They that have the thing signified, have right unto the sign of it: or those who are partakers of the grace of baptism, have a right to the administration of it; so *Acts x. 47.*

But the children of believers are all of them capable of the grace signified in baptism, and some of them are certainly partakers of it, namely, such as dye in their infancy (which is all that can be said of professors) therefore they may and ought to be baptized. For,

1. Infants are made for, and are capable of eternal glory or misery, and must fall dying infants in one of these estates for ever.

2. All infants are born in a state of sin, wherein they are spiritually dead, and under the curse.

3. Unless they are regenerate and born again, they must all perish inevitably, *John iii. 4.* Their regeneration is the grace whereof baptism is a sign or token. Wherever this is, there baptism ought to be administered.

*Fifthly,* God having appointed baptism as the sign and seal of regeneration, unto whom he denies it, he denies the grace signified by it. Why is it the will of

God



God, that unbelievers and impenitent sinners should not be baptized? It is because not granting them the grace, he will not grant them the sign. If therefore God denies the sign unto the infant seed of believers, it must be because he denies them the grace of it; and then all the children of believing parents dying in their infancy must without hope be eternally damned. I do not say, that all must be so, who are not baptized; but all must be so whom God would have not baptized.

But this is contrary to the goodness and law of God, the nature and promises of the covenant, the testimony of Christ reckoning them to the kingdom of God, the faith of godly parents, and the belief of the Church in all ages.

It follows hence unavoidably, that infants who dye in their infancy, have the grace of regeneration, and consequently as good a right unto baptism as believers themselves.

*Sixthly*, All children in their infancy are reckoned unto the covenant of their parents, by virtue of the law of their creation.

For they are all made capable of eternal rewards and punishments, as hath been declared.

But in their own persons, they are not capable of doing good or evil.

It is therefore contrary to the justice of God, and the law of the creation of human kind, wherein many die before they can discern between their right hand and their left, to deal with infants any otherwise but in and according to the covenant of their parents, and that he doth so see *Rom. v. 14*.

Hence I argue,

Those who by God's appointment, and by virtue of the law of their creation, are and must of necessity be included in the covenant of their parents, have the same right with them unto the privileges of that covenant, no express exception being put in against them. This right it is in the power of none to deprive them of, unless they can change the law of their creation.

Thus it is with the children of believers with respect unto the covenant of their parents; whence alone they are said to be *holy*, *1 Cor. vii. 14*.

*Seventhly*, Christ is the messenger of the covenant, *Mal. iii. 1*. That is, of the covenant of God made with *Abraham*. And he was the minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, *Rom. xv. 8*. This covenant was that he would be a God unto *Abraham* and his seed.

Now if this be not so under the New Testament, then was not Christ a faithful messenger, nor did confirm the truth of God in his promises.

This argument alone will bear the weight of the whole cause against all objection. For,

1. Children are still in the same covenant with their parents, or the truth of the promises of God to the fathers was not confirmed by Christ.

2. The right unto the covenant, and interest in its promises wherever it be, gives right unto the administration of its initial seal, *i. e.* to baptism, as *Peter* expressly declares, *Acts ii. 38, 39*. Wherefore,

The right of the infant seed of believers unto baptism, as the initial seal of the covenant, stands on the foundation of the faithfulness of Christ, as the messenger of the covenant, and minister of God, for the confirmation of the truth of his promises.

In brief, a participation of the seal of the covenant is a spiritual blessing. This the seed of believers was once solemnly invested in by God himself; this privilege he hath no where revoked, though he hath changed the outward sign, nor hath he granted unto our children any privilege or mercy in lieu of it now under the Gospel, when all grace and privileges are enlarged to the utmost; his covenant promises concerning them which are multiplied, were confirmed by Christ as a true messenger and minister; he gives the grace of baptism unto many of them, especially those that dye in their infancy; owns children to belong unto his kingdom; esteems them disciples, appoints households to be baptized without exception. And who shall now rise up, and withhold water from them?

This argument may be thus farther cleared, and improved.

Christ is the messenger of the covenant, *Mal. iii. 1*. that is, the covenant of God with *Abraham*, *Gen. xvii. 7*. For,



1. That covenant was with and unto Christ mystical, *Gal. iii. 16*. And he was the messenger of no covenant, but that which was made with himself and his members.

2. He was sent, or was God's messenger, to perform and accomplish the covenant and oath made with *Abraham*, *Luke i. 72, 73*.

3. The end of his message, and of his coming was, that those to whom he was sent, might be blessed with faithful *Abraham*; or, that the blessing of *Abraham* promis'd in the covenant, might come upon them, *Gal. iii. 9, 14*.

To deny this, overthrows the whole relation between the Old Testament and the New; the veracity of God in his promises, and all the properties of the covenant of grace, mentioned *2 Sam. xxiii. 5*.

It was not the covenant of works, neither originally, or essentially; nor the covenant in its legal administration; for he confirmed and sealed that covenant, whereof he was the messenger; but these he abolished.

Let it be named what covenant he was the messenger of, if not of this. Occasional additions of temporal promises do not in the least alter the nature of the covenant.

Herein he was the minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, *Rom. xv. 8*. That is undeniably the covenant made with *Abraham*, enlarged and explained by following promises. This covenant was, that God would be a God unto *Abraham and his seed*; which God himself explains to be his infant seed, *Gen. xvii. 12*. that is, the infant seed of every one of his posterity, who should lay hold on, and avouch that covenant, as *Abraham* did, and not else. This the whole Church did solemnly for themselves and their posterity, whereon the covenant was confirmed and sealed to them all, *Exod. xxiv. 7, 8*. And every one was bound to do the same in his own person; which if he did not, he was to be cut off from the congregation, whereby he forfeited all privileges unto himself and his seed.

The covenant therefore was not granted in its administrations unto the carnal seed of *Abraham* as such; but unto his covenanted seed, those who entred into it, and professedly stood to its terms.

And the promises made unto the fathers were, that their infant seed, their buds, and offspring, should have an equal share in the covenant with them, *Isa. xxii. 24, 25*. *Jer. xxxi. 9, 10*. *Isa. lxi. 9, 10*. *Isa. lxv. 23*. They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. Not only themselves who are the believing, professing seed of those who were blessed of the Lord by a participation of the covenant, *Gal. iii. 9*. but their offspring also, their buds, their little tender ones, are in the same covenant with them.

To deny therefore that the children of believing, professing parents, who have avouched God's covenant, as the Church of *Israel* did, *Exod. xxiv. 7, 8*. have the same right and interest with their parents in the covenant, is plainly to deny the fidelity of Christ in the discharge of his office.

It may be it will be said, That although children have a right to the covenant, or do belong unto it, yet they have no right to the initial seal of it.

This will not suffice; for

(1.) If they have any interest in it, it is either in its grace, or in its administration. If they have the former, they have the latter also, as shall be proved at any time. If they have neither, they have no interest in it; then the truth of the promises of God made unto the fathers was not confirmed by Christ.

(2.) That unto whom the covenant or promise doth belong, to them belongs the administration of the initial seal of it, is expressly declared by the Apostle, *Acts ii. 38, 39*, be they who they will.

(3.) The truth of God's promise is not confirmed, if the sign and seal of them be denied: for that whereon they believed, that God was a God unto their seed, as well as unto themselves was this; that he granted the token of the covenant unto their seed, as well as unto themselves. If this be taken away by Christ, their faith is overthrown; and the promise itself is not confirmed, but weakened, as to the virtue it hath to beget faith and obedience.

Eighthly, Particular testimonies may be pleaded and vindicated, if need be, and the practice of the primitive Church.

\* See also Dr. Owen on the Hebrews, Vol. the First, Exercitation the Sixth; and Vol. the Second, pag. 256. In which places he gives farther light into this truth of Infant Baptism.



# A Vindication of two Passages in Irenæus against the Exceptions of Mr. Tombs.

THE passages are these:

*Adversus Hæreses*, Lib. 2. cap. 39. *Magister ergo existens, magistri quoque habebat etatem, non reprobans nec supergrediens hominem, neque solvens suam legem in se humani generis, sed omnem etatem sanctificans per illam quæ ad ipsum erat similitudinem. Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare, omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes, & parvulos, & pueros, & juvenes, & seniores. Ideo per omnem venit etatem; & infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes; in parvulis, parvulus, sanctificans hanc ipsam habentes etatem, simul & exemplum illis pietatis effectus, & justitiæ & subjectionis; in juvenibus juvenis, exemplum juvenibus fons, & sanctificans Domino; sic & senior in senioribus, ut sit perfectus magister in omnibus, non solum secundum expositionem veritatis, sed & secundum etatem sanctificans simul & seniores, exemplum ipsis quoque fons; deinde & usque ad mortem pervenit, ut sit primogenitus ex mortuis, ipse primatum tenens in omnibus, princeps vitæ, prior omnium, & præcedens omnes.*

Lib. 1. cap. 18. *Ὅσοι γὰρ εἰσι ταῦτας τὴν γυναικὸς μορφῆς, τοσαῦται καὶ ἀποκαταστάσεις. Ὅσοι γὰρ εἰσι ἐκείνων τῶ ἐκκλησιαστικῶ τῆς εἰς θεὸν ἀναλήψεως, καὶ πάσης τῆς νηστείας ἀποδιδόντες καὶ δὲ τὸ εἶδος τὸ ὑπὸ τῆ σαλῆς, ἰδιόχουσι ἀλλοτρίαν ἀπαγγελίαν ἐν τῷ παροῦσι χρόνῳ.*

Mr. Tombs tells us, this proves not infant baptism, because though it be granted, that in *Justin Martyr*, and others of the ancients, to be regenerated, is to be baptized; yet it doth not appear that *Irenæus* meant it so in this place, unless it were proved it is so only meant by him and the ancients. Nor doth *Irenæus*, Lib. 1. cap. 18. term baptism, regeneration; but saith thus, *To the denying of baptism of that regeneration which is unto God.* But that indeed the word, *renascuntur*, are born again, is not meant of baptism, is proved from the words, and the scope of them. For,

1. The words are, *per eum renascuntur*, by him, that is, Christ, are born again. And it is clear from the scope of the speech about the fulness of his age, as a perfect master, that by him notes his person according to his humane nature. Now, if then, by him are born again, be as much as, by him are baptized, this should be *Irenæus's* assertion: That by Christ himself in his human body, infants, and little ones, and boys, and young men, and elder men, are baptized unto God. But this speech is most manifestly false; for neither did Christ baptize any at all in his own person, *John iv. 1, 2. Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples*; nor did the disciples baptize any infant at all, as may be gathered from the whole New Testament.

2. The word which *Irenæus* expresseth, whereby persons are born again to God by Christ, is applied to the example of his age, as the words and scope shew. But he was not in his age, an example of every age by his baptism, as if he did by it sanctify every age; for then he should have been baptized in every age, but in respect of the holiness of his humane nature, which did remain in each age, and so exemplarily sanctify each age to God, so as that there was no age but was capable of holiness by conformity to his example.

3. *Irenæus's* words are: *Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare, omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes, & parvulos &c.* Now if the meaning were, that Christ came to save all that were baptized by him, or by his appointment, then he came to save *Simon Magus*, or whoever are, or have been baptized rightly. But in that sense the proposition is most palpably false, and therefore that sense is not to be attributed to his words.

4. Christ is by *Irenæus* said to sanctify as a perfect master, not only according to the exposition of truth, but also as an example to them of piety, justice, and subjection. But this is to be understood, not in respect of his baptism only, but his whole life, in which he was an example, even an infant, for then he did willingly empty himself, took upon him the form of a servant, &c. *Phil. ii. 7, 8.*

By







It is first used in the Scripture, *Mark* i. 8. *John* i. 33. and to the same purpose, *Acts* i. 5. In every place it either signifies to *pour*, or the expression is equivocal, *I baptize you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost*; which is the accomplishment of that promise, that *the Holy Ghost should be poured on them*.

For the other places, *Mark* vii. 3, 4. *πλύνω* and *βαπτίζω* is plainly the same, both to *wash*. *Luke* xi. 38, the same with *Mark* vii. 3. No one instance can be given in the Scripture, wherein *βαπτίζω* doth necessarily signify either to *dip*, or *plunge*.

*Βαπτίζω* may be considered either as to its original, natural sense; or as to its mystical use in the ordinance.

This distinction must be observed concerning many other words in the New Testament, as *ἐκκλῆσια*, *χουδοκία*, and others, which have a peculiar sense in their mystical use.

In this sense, as it expresseth baptism, it denotes to *wash* only, and not to *dip* at all: for so it is expounded, *Tit.* iii. 5. *Ephes.* v. 26. *Heb.* x. 22. & *Pet.* iii. 21. And it signifies that communication of the spirit, which is expressed by *pouring out*, and *sprinkling*, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25. and expresseth our being *washed in the blood of Christ*, *Tit.* ii. 14. *Heb.* ix. 14, 19, 23.

Wherefore in this sense, as the word is applied unto the ordinance, the sense of dipping is utterly excluded. And tho' as a mere external mode it may be used, provided the person dipped be naked; yet to urge it as necessary, overthrows the nature of the sacrament.

For the original and natural signification of it, it signifies, to *dip*, to *plunge*, to *die*, to *wash*, to *cleanse*.

But I say, 1. It doth not signify properly to *dip*, or *plunge*, for that in Greek is, *ὑδατίζω* and *ὑδαπτίζω*. 2. It no where signifies to *dip*, but as a mode of, and in order to washing. 3. It signifies the dipping of a finger, or the least touch of the water, and not plunging the whole. 4. It signifies to wash also in all good authors.

I have not all those quoted to the contrary. In the quotations of them whom I have, if it be intended, that they say, it signifies to *dip*, and not to *wash*, or to *dip* only, there is neither truth nor honesty in them by whom they are quoted.

*Scapula* is one, a common book; and he gives it the sense of *lavo*, *abluo*, to *wash*, and *wash away*.

*Stephanus*, is another, and he expressly in sundry places assigns *lavo* and *abluo* to be also the sense of it.

*Aquinas* is for dipping of children, provided it be done three times in honour of the Trinity; but he maintains pouring or sprinkling to be lawful also; affirming that *Laurentius*, who lived about the time two hundred and fifty, so practis'd. But he meddles not with the sense of the word, as being too wise to speak of that which he understood not; for he knew no Greek.

In *Suidas*, the great treasury of the Greek tongue, it is rendred by *malesfacio*, *lavo*, *abluo*, *purgo*, *mundo*.

The places in the other authors being not quoted, I cannot give an account of what they say. I have searched some of them in every place wherein they mention baptism, and find no one word to the purpose. I must say, and will make it good, that no honest man who understands the Greek tongue, can deny the word to signify, to *wash*, as well as to *dip*.

It must not be denied, but that in the primitive times, they did use to baptize both grown persons and children oftentimes by dipping; but they affirmed it necessary to dip them stark naked, and that three times; but not one ever denied pouring water to be lawful.

The Apostle, *Rom.* vi. 3, 4, 5. is dehorting from sin, exhorting to holiness and new obedience, and gives this argument from the necessity of it, and our ability for it, both taken from our initiation into the virtue of the death and life of Christ expressed in our baptism; that by virtue of the death and burial of Christ, we should be dead unto sin, sin being slain thereby; and by virtue of the resurrection of Christ, we should be quickened unto newness of life, as *Peter* declares, *1 Pet.* iii. 21. Our being buried with him, and our being planted together into the likeness of his death, and likeness of his resurrection, is the same with our old man being crucified with him, *ver.* 6. and the destroying of the body of sin, and our being raised from the dead with him; which is all that is intended in the place.









A WORD OF  
**A D V I C E**  
 TO THE  
**CITIZENS of LONDON.**



Do hope you are all sensible of those obligations that are on you, to seek the publick good of the city, whereof you are members, in your several capacities; I am sure you ought so to be. For all laws, divine and human, all things that are praise-worthy among men, all your own circumstances in peace, safety and profit, all your interest in reputation and posterity, with the oaths you have taken to the city, do require it of you. And you know, that this publick good of the city, which you are so obliged to seek and promote, cannot consist in the end of any private, separate designs; but in what is comprehensive of the whole commonalty, in its order, state, and circumstances. A steady design and endeavour for the promotion hereof, in all that is virtuous and praise-worthy in you, as citizens; and for which some have been renowned in all ages. Where this is not, mens lusts and passions, and self-interest will on all occasions be the rule of their actions. Neither hath the city, as such, any other animating principle of consistency, or stability. Outward order and law without it are but a dead carcass; and the citizens a multitude living in one perpetual storm, which any external impression can easily drive into confusion. So far therefore as this design worketh effectually in you, regulating your endeavours and actions, you are good and useful citizens, and no farther. He who is so intent on his private occasions, as to neglect the good of the publick, is useless, a character of no reputation; and he who hath any design inconsistent with it, is treacherous.

And this is worth your consideration, that this city, whereof you are members, which now consists of you, hath been for some ages past justly esteemed one of

the



the most eminent and renowned cities in the world. For although other cities may be the seats of greater empires, and some may exceed it in number of inhabitants; yet take it in all its concerns, of religion, government, and usefulness in the world, by trade and otherwise, and it may be said without immodesty, that the sun shines not on any that is to be preferred before it.

It is therefore unquestionable, that you can have no greater interest, no more useful wisdom, than in taking care, and using all diligence, that the decay or ruin of such a city be not under your hands, nor in your generation: that you leave not such a detested remembrance of your selves unto future ages. To forfeit all the mercies that divine providence hath bestowed on this city, to bury its glory and reputation by and under your miscarriages, would leave such a character of your selves unto posterity, as I hope you will never deserve.

And you cannot but be stirred up unto your duty herein, by the consideration of the dealings of God with this city in late years, which have been great and marvelous. Never had any city on the earth in so short a time, so many divine warnings, so many calls from heaven, so many distresses, so many indications of God's displeasure, as in plague, fire, war, and the like, and yet continued in its station without a visible compliance with them. *Niniveh* repented upon one warning, and was not ruined. *Jerusalem* refused to do so, upon many, and perished for ever. Whatever disputes there may be about the causes of these things, not to take notice of them as indications of divine displeasure, is a branch of that atheism, which will quickly turn instructive warnings into desolating judgments. The heathen dealt not so with their supposed deities, on such occasions.

Besides on the other hand, this city hath had no less eminent pledges of divine care and concernment in it. Without them, it had either lain in its ashes, or returned into them again mingled with blood, by the designings of evil men. And these no less than the former call for diligent attendance unto your duty, in the seeking the publick good of the place, in a neglect whereof God himself will be eminently despised.

But yet after all these divine warnings and mercies, whatever other apprehensions any may have, under a pursuit of their own designs, the present state of your city, in the judgment of all unprejudiced persons, is deplorable, and in a tendency unto ruin. For it is filled with divisions, animosities, feuds, and distrusts, on various occasions, from one end of it unto the other. And whilst it is so, some persons are allowed and countenanced to encrease and enflame them, by publick weekly libels, full of scandalous, illegal, malicious defamations and provocations, against whole parties of men, a thing never heard of, at least never tolerated in any government, where the subjects of it are at peace, under the protection of the law. And though it may be that which pleaseth men light and vain, or malicious and revengeful, or such as hope for advantage by publick confusion; yet is it marvelous that wise men should not observe, how disadvantageous it is unto the government it self. Where a city is thus divided in it self, we have infallible assurance, that it cannot stand. Nor can this so do, for unless its divisions be healed, they will one way or other, at one time or another prove its ruin. At present, it is only divine providence immediately by it self, supplying the want of an animating union, that preserves it from dissolution.

At the same time, and by the same means, those publick funds of money, which should give trust and trade their due circulation, are greatly failed among you. Such things indeed should not be mentioned unto the encouragement of our enemies, could they be concealed. But it is to no purpose to hide that, which the sun shines on in the sight of all; nor to be silent in that, which is the common talk of all that walk your streets. That renowned name of the *chamber of London*, the sacred repository and treasury of the fortunes and bread of widows and orphans, who are under the especial care of God, which the city therein have taken upon them to represent, is so shaken in its reputation, as to render the thing it self useless. And it will be well, if that which in its righteous administration was the stability of the city, do not now through the cries and tears of the oppressed (being of that sort of persons, who have an especial interest in divine justice and compassion) contribute towards the shaking of its foundations. And it is somewhat strange to me, that men can sleep in peace, in the enjoyment of their private riches, whilst such a publick trust is failing under their conduct.

The



The growth also of penury amongst many, with unparallel'd failing of multitudes, whereof there are instances renewed almost every day, in coincidence with the divisions mentioned, hath almost put an end unto the small remainder of private trust, the only sovereign ligament of your being and constitution. For from hence many begin to think, that they have nothing safe but what is by them, or in their own immediate custody; and when they have so disposed of their substance, they quickly begin to fear, that it is most unsafe in that disposal. For when the minds of men are shaken from the true and real foundation of this trust and confidence, they know not where to fix again, until they are pursued by their own fears into farther disorders.

Whereas therefore cities stand not on the foundation of their walls, houses, and buildings; but on the solid, harmonious principles of the minds of the citizens, and unity in design for the promotion of its publick good; where they are weakened, impaired, perplexed, and cast into such horrid confusions, as they must be by the ways and means mentioned, the least impression on them will rush them into destruction.

Whilst things are in this state and condition among you, it is sufficiently known, that the avowed, implacable enemies of your city, I mean the Papists, are intent on all advantages, improving them unto their own ends; their present design being so open and naked, as that it is the common discourse of all sorts of persons; yet is it such, as nothing but the prudence of the government, and patience of the nation can frustrate and disappoint. And not to reflect with any severity on our own countrymen, who are of that religion, beyond what is openly manifest; you are much mistaken, if you know not, that your city is the principal object of the hatred, malice, revenge, and destructive designs of the ruling party of that religion or faction abroad, through the whole world. Unto their conduct of affairs you owe the flames of sixty six. Nor will they rest, but in your utter ruin, or, which is worse, the establishment of their religion amongst you.

I heartily wish, that there might be one short answer returned unto this representation of things in your city; namely, that they are not so as they are represented; but that these things are only fears, or fictions to promote some sinister ends. I wish all that hath been spoken, might be so at once dissipated and blown away. But the truth is, it is the least part of the ingredients of that direful composition, which threatens the ruin of the city, and but a little scruple of any of them that hath been mentioned, or can have any place in the designed brevity of this address. Yea, sundry things of the same nature with them, and some no less pernicious than the worst of them, are for just reasons, and to avoid all offence, here utterly concealed. There is scarce a man that walks your streets, unless he reel with self interest and prejudice; but can give you a more dreadful account of the present state of the city, than is here offered unto you.

This therefore being the state of things among you, it is but a reasonable enquiry, whether you judge not your selves obliged in conscience, honour, and interest, to postpone all your private inclination, animosities, designs, and desires, arising for the most part from things foreign to the city, unto the publick good thereof, and the ways whereby it may be promoted; or, whether you had rather sacrifice the city unto utter ruin, than to forego those inclinations and aims, which are suggested unto you by the interest of others, no way belonging unto the peace thereof. And you may be prompted to make this enquiry of your selves, because in the peace of the city you shall have peace, and not otherwise. There is no assurance unto any of an escape in publick calamities. And those who have most, are most concerned in the preservation of order. It is a fatal mistake in men of high places, and plentiful enjoyments in the world, to suppose, that all things must bow to their humour, that there is not more care and diligence, more of condescension, compliance, and self denial required in them, for the composing of publick differences, and the preservation of tranquillity, than is of others. Nothing but necessity can countenance wise men to venture much against nothing.

Give me leave therefore to offer two things unto you, the one in general, the other more particular, with respect unto your present duty, and that in order unto the proposal of other things of the like kind, if this find acceptance.



And I am in the first place sure enough, that if we are Christians, if we are not ashamed of our religion, and the conduct thereof, if we believe either the promises or threatnings of God in his word, it is your present duty, and that which you must give an account of hereafter, to endeavour in your places and capacities the promotion of all those things wherewith God is well pleased, and whereon he hath used to turn away impendent, threatned, deserved judgments from cities and nations. What they are, your teachers can instruct you, and if they do not, it will be no excuse unto you in the neglect of them. If the city perish for want of reformation, or a compliance with divine warnings in turning unto God, the ruin of it in part will lye at your doors. And if such considerations are despised, as usually they are, as impertinent preachments, you will find e're long your condition remediless.

This is premised only in general, to prepare the way for an enumeration of the things that belong unto it, that may be offered hereafter. At present, I shall propose only one thing unto you in particular; and that is, whether the present prosecution of Protestant *Dissenters* in the city, be not diametrically opposite unto that publick good of it, in all its concerns, which you are obliged to promote? You will say, it may be, that this is not your work, but the work of the law. But I am sure such things are done in your streets every day, as no law mentioneth, or giveth countenance unto. Let the matter of fact be rightly stated, and it will appear, whether any of you have a blameable accession therunto or no.

There is no complaint intended against the law about religion, which have the stamp of authority upon them. Yet is it no offence to say, that at present they are suited neither to the good of religion, nor of the city. For this is the condition of all penal laws, that they have their sole use from the circumstances which they do respect, and not from any thing in themselves. And as there may be mistakes in their first enacting, rendering them destructive unto the ends which they are designed to promote; so the alteration of circumstances may make their execution pernicious; as I wish it be not in the present case, as wise men have judged it would be. However the present proceedings against Protestant *Dissenters*, under the pretence of law, are accompanied with so many unparallel'd severities, as no good man unbiassed by interests, can possibly give countenance unto. And hereof we may give some instances.

The prosecution and execution of the laws against *Dissenters*, are not left unto the ordinary process of the administration of justice, as those against the Papists are, and all penal laws ought to be; but the vilest and most profligate villains, that the nation can afford, are intitled, encouraged, and employed for their own advantage, under the name of *Informers*, to rule and controul all civil officers, to force them to serve their known, base ends, in searching after, finding out, pursuing and destroying of such, as are supposed to be offenders against those laws. Although their persons are known to be profligate, and their ends to be only their own gain; yet no ordinary magistrate dares deny them his ready obedience and service, in the intimations of their pleasure, which makes many men of generous spirits weary of all publick characters and employments. A way of procedure this is, which the greatest, and wisest pagan Emperor, whoever suffered any persecution of the Christian religion, did forbid; and which hath ever been infamous in all nations, as that which tended unto the dishonour of the government, and the disturbance of publick tranquillity, having had formerly a fatal catastrophe in this nation it self.

Besides, the present procedure in the execution of these laws is accompanied with clancular convictions, judgments, and determinations of penalties with the infliction of them, for a first, second, third, time, and so on, without any the least notice given of the first pretended offence, without summons, trial, or hearing of the parties concerned. Now whatever any may pretend; whose places may give countenance unto their judgments, this way of procedure in the execution of penal laws, is contrary unto the example given by God himself unto all mankind in such cases; contrary to the light of nature, and all principles of equity; contrary to the usage of all civilized nations in all ages; contrary to the true use and end of all penal laws, with the ordinary administration of justice in this kingdom. An invention it is to make justice abscond it self in corners, like robbers on the highway, to watch



watch for the ruin and destruction of unwary men; than which nothing is more adverse unto its nature, use, and end. That pretence of justice in the execution of penal laws, whose first and principal end is not the warning of men to avoid the penalty enacted, is oppression, and nothing else. Not to reflect any thing therefore on the laws themselves, it is manifest that in this part of their present execution, there hath been high oppression, to which too many in the city have made an accession.

Again, the laws made against Papists, or that of the 23. of *Eliz.* is applied unto these Protestant *Dissenters*. For that, that law was made against popish recusants only, is so notoriously evident, from the time wherein it was made, with all the circumstances of that season; the known interest, dangers, and counsels of the kingdom at that season; the reason of its making as expressed in the *preamble*; the full description in the law it self of the persons intended; the interpretation of it in practice for so long a time; the providing of another law, many years after, with respect only unto such *Dissenters* as were not Papists, from whose penalties the Papists were excepted, because of the provision made for their restraint and punishment; that it would be marvelous that any person of an ordinary understanding, from some general and ambiguous words in an occasional passage in it, should countenance the application of it unto Protestant *Dissenters*, but that we know that the whole souls of some men are forced to bow and yield obedience unto prejudice and interest.

And the execution of these laws, as managed by the *Informers*, hath been accompanied for the most part with so much rage, and violence, profane swearing, and bloody menaces, as hath occasioned the terror and unspeakable damage of many, if not in the city it self, yet in its suburbs. Whether this be acceptable unto God, of good report, and praise-worthy among men, judge ye.

But that which exceeds all other exorbitances in this kind is, that whilst these *Dissenters* are thus pursued, under the pretence of the execution of civil penal statutes, there is set on foot a course of excommunications, in order unto the deprivation of their liberties and livelihoods, wherein a divine institution is so shamefully prostituted unto secular ends, as that it is highly scandalous unto the Christian religion.

And this is continued to be offered, notwithstanding the presentment of the late Jury amongst you. They pretend their judgment to be, that the best way for the obtaining peace and quietness in the city, in its present circumstances, is the diligent, severe execution of the penal statutes against *Dissenters*. They might also have presented as their judgment, with an equal evidence of truth and prudence, that in time of publick danger from fires, by reason of their unparallel'd frequency, the best way for the quenching of them, is the diligent casting of fire balls into the houses that do remain. They might have given an equal credit to both by their authority, in the judgment of all men of any tolerable understanding.

And of the same sort, with the like mixture of good nature, is their officious inhumanity, in desiring the prosecution and ruin of all nonconforming ministers who live in or about *London*; though under great mistakes as to some of them, whom they thought meet to name in particular. There are penal laws which respect evils, that are so in their own nature, antecedently unto the constitution of the penalties contained in them. Such are murder, adultery, perjury, profane swearing, drunkenness, cheating, and the like. It is consistent with the Christian religion, and that common candor and ingenuity which is required among mankind, for every man in his station to press for the diligent execution of those laws. But there is another sort of them, which first constitute evils and then penalties. They make things to be faults, which otherwise on no account are so, and then punish them. Such is the law prohibiting nonconforming ministers to live in corporations; this is made a particular crime by that law, and is so no otherwise. Before the making of that law, it was as lawful for them so to do, as for any of this Jury; and it will be so again, when the voice of publick good for its legal suspension, or abrogation, shall be heard, above the outcries of some sort of persons. And where publick good is not the only rule and measure of the execution of such laws, they are all oppressive; nor are they otherwise interpreted in any righteous nation. For men voluntarily to press for the severe execution of such laws, argues a fierceness of disposition, which hath ever its stamp and character upon it; which the gentlemen of the Jury, the next time they meet, may do well to enquire whose it is.



**THE**  
**STATE of the KINGDOM,**  
**with respect to the present Bill against CONVENTICLES.**



THE whole kingdom is at present in peace and quietness, all persons being under the highest satisfaction in his Majesty's government, and absolutely acquiescing therein.

In this condition all individual men are improving their industry, according to their best skill and opportunities, for their own private advantage and service of the publick.

Such is the state of things in *Europe* at present and among our selves, that the intire industry of all the inhabitants of this nation, with all possible encouragements given thereunto, is scarcely able to maintain themselves in their present respective conditions, and the whole in its due splendor, honour, and strength.

The *Bill against Conventicles*, if passed, will introduce a disturbance into this order of things in every county, every city, every borough, and town corporate, and almost every village in the nation.

Those on whom this disturbance will fall, are, for the most part, merchants, clothiers, operators in our own manufactures, and occupants of land, with the like furtherers and promoters of trade.

The end aimed at is their conformity, or their ruin. For the ministers being, for the most part, poor, and ruined already, the great penalty directed to be laid on them in the first place must immediately fall upon the people, those also that are able being liable to distress for the penalty of others that are poor, which, if executed, will be the certain ruin of many.

It is manifest, that few will conform upon the severity, if any at all; nor is it a suitable means for the conviction of any one man in the world.

The people therefore will, some of them, continue to meet, notwithstanding this act; and some of them at present, it may be, will forbear.

For those who will continue their meeting, as accounting themselves obliged in conscience so to do, they will immediately so dispose of their estates and concerns, that they shall be as much out of the reach of the penalties of the law, as can well and honestly be contrived, nor can any man blame them for so doing. And what an obstruction this will prove in the circulation of the trade of the nation, is easy to imagine.

Others, who will forbear going at present to meetings, yet will all prepare themselves so to dispose of their estates and concerns, as that they and their families may not be ruined here by penalties, or that they may not subsist elsewhere.

In the mean time all trust will fail between persons of mutual engagements. Those who are not obnoxious to the penalties of this act, will fear that others who are so, will be ruined by it; and so take their concerns out of their hands: those who are so obnoxious will call in theirs out of the hands of others, lest they should be there liable to distress; and so all mutual trust in the nation will fail.

The minds of innumerable persons, now at peace and rest, will be cast into fears, troubles, perplexities, and restless contrivances for their own safety, by hiding



flying, or the like ways of escape; and thereby an issue will be put to all their industry at present, not useless to the commonwealth.

The residue of the body of the people, not delighted with these severities, will stand and gaze, looking on with great discouragement as to their own endeavours, being many of them entangled with the concerns of those that suffer, and naturally disliking *Informers* upon penal statutes, which sort of men they will not rejoice to see enriched with their peaceable neighbours goods.

That under this great change in the minds and industry of so considerable a part of the nation, there will hardly by the remaining, discomposed party, be a revenue raised for the private occasions of the subjects, and a surpluse for the necessity of the government, as things are stated at this day in the world, is evident to all impartial men.

There can be but two things pleaded to give countenance to this high severity, which will certainly be attended with all the consequences mentioned.

The first is, that an evil greater than all those enumerated, will be prevented by it: and of evils, the least is to be chosen.

The other, that a good, which shall out balance all those evils will be attained.

The evil to be prevented is sedition, commotions, and tumults, which the meetings now to be prohibited will occasion.

It is acknowledged, that there is more evil in these things, than in all those before mentioned. But it is positively denied, that there is the least cause of suspicion of any such evils from the meetings now prohibited, at least as they may be stated under the inspection of the magistrate. For,

Experience of the resolved peaceableness under great opportunities to attempt disturbances during the plague, fire, and war, in those who thus meet, evidence the contrary against all exceptions.

Their declared principles are for all due subjection to his Majesty; and they are ready to give that security of their adherence to their principles, which all other subjects do, and which mankind, in such cases, must be contented withal.

It is their interest to be peaceable and quiet, as enjoying under his Majesty's government, the best condition they are capable of in this world, whilst they have liberty for their consciences in the things of God.

They are particularly sensible of the obligation that is put upon them in their liberty, unto subjection, and gratitude to his Majesty beyond other subjects, which will oblige them to faithfulness and stability in their allegiance.

The fears therefore of the consequence of this evil is plainly pretended, without any ground of reason, or cause of suspicion.

The good to be aimed at, which must out balance all the evils mentioned before, is *Conformity*.

There is already an agreement in doctrine, and the substantials of worship amongst most, and will be so, though a well regulated liberty shall be granted.

An uniformity in all rituals and ceremonies is so far from being a good, that should lie in the balance against all the evils, which the pressing of it with the severity intended will certainly produce; as that, it may be, it will not compensate the trouble of any one quiet and peaceable subject in the kingdom.

It is justly feared, that the bill, as proposed, leaves neither the King himself, nor any of his subjects, that just right, liberty, and privilege, which are inseparably inherent in him, and his crown, and which belong unto them by the fundamental laws of the land.

It is presumed, what has thus in general been offered, may appear more evident by the following particulars.

1. Such is the state of affairs abroad in the world, and among our selves, that the encouragement of all sorts of persons unto honest industry in their respective capacities and employs, is absolutely necessary unto the supportment of the honour and government of the kingdom, and the comfortable subsistence of the subjects of it. Without this, in the securest peace, we shall speedily find one of the worst effects of war, in a distressing general poverty.



2. Unto the encouragement of such honest endeavours, mutual trust among all sorts of men, is necessary; which can never be attained nor preserved, but where all peaceable persons have the same protection and assurance of the law. Wherever this trust generally fails, it threatens the dissolution of any society of men.

3. All sorts of *Dissenters* are disposed unto a complete acquiescency in the government, desiring no other encouragement unto their usefulness under it, but only that force be not offered unto their consciences in things appertaining unto the worship of God, which is the common right of nature, and grace, as well as the present visible interest of the kingdom.

4. Unless these things, namely, industrious endeavours in the way of trade and usefulness, common mutual trust, with acquiescency in the government be countenanced and preserved, it is impossible that the welfare and prosperity of the kingdom should be continued, as, by God's blessing upon them, they will be.

5. The present prosecution of them, who dissent from the Church of *England*, tends directly unto the subversion of all these things, and hath in a great measure already effected it; nor doth it promote the interest of religion, or conformity unto the Church it self. For,

(1.) By the execution of the *Act against seditious Conventicles* (whereof in the true sense and construction of the law, not one of those of the *Dissenters* are) many have their goods taken away, multitudes are forced to remove their habitations and to give over their useful callings, to the great obstruction and ruin of common industry in many places.

(2.) By the writs and processess on the statutes for not coming to Church (not intended, as is humbly conceived, against Protestants) whereby a devastation is designed of the estates of many peaceable and loyal persons, at the wills of many needy prosecutors and *Informers*, all mutual trust is shaken and impaired. For amongst multitudes of industrious subjects, none know how soon themselves, or those in whom they are concerned, may fall under the ruining execution of those statutes, they being a very great number who are already sued and molested thereby. And some in demanding their just debts have been threatened by their debtors with a prosecution on those statutes, and so forced to desist the recovery of their debts, to avoid greater inconveniency than the loss of them.

(3.) By the act for banishing ministers five miles from corporations (humbly conceived contrary to the birthright privilege of every *English* man unconvicted of any crime) many are driven from their habitations, many imprisoned, to the ruin of themselves and their families, and the great dissatisfaction of all uninterested persons.

(4.) Whereas sundry justices of the peace, men of known integrity, and of especial interest in the places of their residence, are threatened and sued for not complying with the unreasonable desires of every *Informers*, whereby they are discouraged in the discharge of their duty, and weary of their office; it is a matter of great dissatisfaction unto all sober men. For the persons so molested, are known to design nothing but the prosperity and welfare of the place wherein they live and act in their office.

(5.) Most of those, who act visibly in these prosecutions, are persons of ill fame and reputation, desperate in their outward fortunes, and profligate in their conversations, whose agency is a scandal unto them by whom they are employed. And both these things last mentioned evidently tend to the dissatisfaction and disturbance of the minds of sober and honest men. For as by this procedure the industry of multitudes is defeated, and mutual trust impaired among all sorts of men; so are the minds of many diverted from a just acquiescency in the government, to hearken after changes and alterations, and made obnoxious unto ill impressions.

(6.) Neither is religion in general promoted by these proceedings, as is manifest in the event; nor can it so be. For as they are contrary to the prime dictates of the Christian religion (as is humbly conceived) so many immoralities are occasioned by them. To omit other instances, the vilest persons being encouraged in the cases mentioned to swear for their own advantage, there have been in a short time more publick perjuries before magistrates, than can be proved or suspected to have been in some ages before.

(7.) Nor



(7.) Nor is conformity, the end pretended to be aimed at, at all advanced by them; as is sufficiently manifest in universal experience. And whereas the only way to promote either religion, or conformity, is by the laborious preaching and exemplary, humble conversation of the clergy, if any should not like this way, but betake themselves to force alone, they would have no reason to expect success.

8. Whereas therefore his Majesty hath long since declared his royal sense of these things; and both houses of Parliament have intimated their desire and intention to give some ease and relief unto the consciences of sober and peaceable Dissenters; and many wise and judicious magistrates have openly declined, what lieth in them, all ingagement in these prosecutions; so that the visible prosecutors are generally persons of ill fame and reputation, seeking to repair the ruins of their idleness and licentiousness by the spoils of the honest labours of other men, while the generality of sober and industrious people in the nation, who understand how much they are concerned in the peaceable endeavours of others, dislike these proceedings. To prevent an offence by petitioning, it is humbly offered unto the Parliament, to free the minds of so great numbers of peaceable subjects as are concerned in these things, from fears and disquietments, and the estates of many from ruin, to encourage industry, mutual trust, and universal acquiescency in the government, to vindicate the honour of the Protestant religion, and prepare the way for a future coalescency in God's good time, through love and condescension, by the removal of these occasions of animosities, distrusts, and provocations, that they would by order suspend the farther prosecution of the penal laws against Dissenters in religion, until upon mature consideration they shall have settled things in a better way, unto the glory of God, the honour of his Majesty, the security of the Protestant religion, and prosperity of the kingdom; which are all earnestly prayed for, by those concerned in this address.

## PROTESTANT DISSIDENTS

### Desire their Liberty.



Unto this resolution of a steadfast adherence unto the Protestant religion, in opposition unto Popery, we have many peculiar engagements. For (1.) Our principles concerning Church order, rule, and worship, wherein we differ from the Church of England, are not capable of a compliance with, or reconciliation unto those of the Papacy; but are contradictory unto them, and utterly inconsistent with them. Where there is an agreement in general principles, and men differ only in their application unto some particulars, those differences are capable







capable of a reconciliation; but where the principles themselves are directly contradictory, as it is between us and the Papists in this matter, they are capable of no reconciliation.

(2.) We have no interest that may be practised on by the arts or insinuations of the Papists, for we are neither capable of any advantages by ecclesiastical domination, power, promotions, with dignities and revenues belonging thereto, which are the principal allurements of the Papacy; nor are engaged in any such combination, political or ecclesiastical, as that the contrivance of a few, should draw on the compliance of the whole party. These things being utterly contrary unto, and inconsistent with our principles, the Papists have no way of attempting us, but by mere force and violence.

(3.) Our fixed judgment being the same with that of all the first reformers, namely, that in the idolatrous apostacy of the Papal Church, with bloody persecutions, the antichristian state foretold in the Scripture doth consist, we are for ever excluded from all thoughts of compliance with them, or reconciliation unto them.

(4.) Whereas our principles concerning Church order, rule, and worship, are directly suited unto the dissolution and ruin of the Papal Church state (whence the Papists take their warrants for all the evil contrivances, which some of them are guilty of in this kingdom) and will, so far as they are taken out of the Scripture, at length effect it; we can have no other expectation from the prevalency of their interest in this nation, but utter extirpation and destruction. We are therefore fully satisfied, that our interest and duty in self-preservation consists in a firm adherence unto the Protestant religion as established in this nation, and the defence thereof, against all the attempts of the Papacy.

4. We own and acknowledge the power of the King, or supreme magistrate in this nation, as it is declared in the *thirty seventh article* of religion, and are ready to defend and assist in the administration of the government in all causes, according unto the law of the land, with all other good Protestant subjects of the kingdom.

We do therefore humbly desire,

*First*, That we may have an exemption from all laws and penalties, civil or ecclesiastical, for our dissent in some things from the Church of *England*, as at present established in the rule of it; and a liberty to worship God peaceably in our own assemblies; upon our renunciation of Popery, by law prescribed, and the subscription of our ministers, or publick teachers, unto the *articles of religion*, as before expressed.

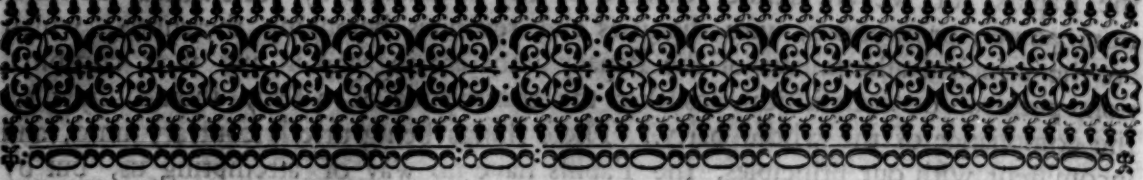
*Secondly*, That as unto oaths, offices, and payment of duties, none whereof we do refuse, that we may be left unto the same laws and rules with all other Protestant subjects, that there may be the least difference remaining between us and them, and the greatest evidence of our being united in the defence of the Protestant religion, and interest of the nation.





capable of a reconciliation: but where the principles themselves are directly contrary, as it is between us and the Papists in this matter, they are capable of no reconciliation.

(3) We have no reason to suppose that any of the arts or inducements of



more force and violence.

(4) Our fixed judgment being the same with that of all the reformers, namely, that in the idolatrous apostasy of the Papal Church, with bloody persecutions, the

genuineness of the Christian faith is lost, we are for ever excluded from all thoughts of compliance with them, or reconciliation unto them.

(5) Whereas our principles concerning Church order, rule, and worship, are different from those of the Papists, we are for ever excluded from all thoughts of compliance with them, or reconciliation unto them.

(6) Whereas our principles concerning the rights of the people, and the rights of the

kingdom, are different from those of the Papists, we are for ever excluded from all thoughts of compliance with them, or reconciliation unto them.

(7) Whereas our principles concerning the rights of the people, and the rights of the

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(11) Whereas our principles concerning the rights of the people, and the rights of the

kingdom, are different from those of the Papists, we are for ever excluded from all thoughts of compliance with them, or reconciliation unto them.

(12) Whereas our principles concerning the rights of the people, and the rights of the

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## The CASE of

# Present DISTRESSES

## ON

# NONCONFORMISTS

## EXAMINED.

We do therefore humbly desire

First, That we may have an exemption from all laws and penalties civil or ec-

clesiastical, for our dissent in some things from the Church of England, as are pre-

scribed in the Act of Uniformity, and a liberty to worship God peaceably in our

own churches, and in the open air, without being liable to any punishment, or

prosecution, or any other disadvantage, for the same.

Secondly, That we may have an exemption from all laws and penalties civil or ec-

clesiastical, for our dissent in some things from the Church of England, as are pre-

scribed in the Act of Uniformity, and a liberty to worship God peaceably in our

own churches, and in the open air, without being liable to any punishment, or

prosecution, or any other disadvantage, for the same.

Thirdly, That we may have an exemption from all laws and penalties civil or ec-

clesiastical, for our dissent in some things from the Church of England, as are pre-

scribed in the Act of Uniformity, and a liberty to worship God peaceably in our

own churches, and in the open air, without being liable to any punishment, or

prosecution, or any other disadvantage, for the same.

Fourthly, That we may have an exemption from all laws and penalties civil or ec-

clesiastical, for our dissent in some things from the Church of England, as are pre-

scribed in the Act of Uniformity, and a liberty to worship God peaceably in our

own churches, and in the open air, without being liable to any punishment, or

prosecution, or any other disadvantage, for the same.

Fifthly, That we may have an exemption from all laws and penalties civil or ec-



the injury of others, or disturbance of natural order, is one of the principal benefits of government in the world, and one chief end of its institution. If this be taken away, the law of nature is violated, the chief end of government is destroyed, and all things are reduced to force and confusion. This men are deprived of in this practice, namely, of lawful self-defence before conviction, and the execution of penalties. And it is to no purpose to pretend, that this is a matter of small moment; so that although there should be a deviation in it, from the common rule, yet the law of nature in general may be kept inviolable: for that law being the animating soul of all human government, as the whole in the whole; and the whole in every part, if it be wittingly contravened in any instance, it tends to the dissolution of the whole; and where any such thing is admitted, it will fully the beauty, and weaken the rightful power of any government.

3. It hath been always rejected in all nations, even among the heathen, who have exercised government according unto the rules of reason and equity. So the laws and usage of the Romans is declared by *Festus*, Acts xxv. *It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to dye, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.* It is not of any weight to object, that this was in the case of death; for the reason of the law is universal, namely, that every one who is charged of a crime, in order unto punishment, should have liberty to answer for himself. And it was observed by them in all criminal causes whatever. No instance can be given of their varying in this process, but it is noted as an oppression. And the same practice is secured by the laws and usages of all civilized nations. For,

4. This procedure of allowing men, charged with any crime, real or pretended, liberty to answer for themselves before judgment and execution, is so manifestly grounded on natural equity, so inseparable from the common presumptions of right and wrong amongst mankind, as that it could never be wrested from them on any pretence whatsoever. It is a contradiction unto common sense in morality and polity, for a man to be convicted of a crime exposing him to penalty, and not be allowed to make his own defence before such conviction. Yea, let men call such a sentence and its execution by what name they please, there is no conviction in the case; and it is ridiculous to call it so, where a man is not allowed to defend himself, or plead his own innocence, if he be ready so to do. The common saying of *Qui statuit aliquid, parte inaudita altera, equum licet statuerit, haud equus fuit*, is no less owned as unto its natural equity, than that other, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri non feceris*; and both of them condemn this practice in the consciences of all men, not blinded by prejudice or interest.

5. The general ends of penal laws, which alone make them warrantable in government, are inconsistent with such clancular convictions as are in this case pretended. Their first intention is authority to enquire into offences, whether they are real or no, for the preservation of publick good and peace. And if it be found that the complaints concerning them are causeless, the second intention, which respects punishment, is superseded. As God declared in the case of *Sodom*, unto the inhabitants whereof, after inquiry, he granted a personal conviction by the Angel he sent among them, unto whom they openly declared their own guilt. To omit the first intention of law, and to go *per saltum* unto the latter, is to make that which was designed for the good of all men, to be unto the danger of all, and ruin of many. For,

6. The practice designed takes away all security of the goods and estates from many peaceable subjects, even of all unto whom the case extends; for every evil man is enabled hereby, for his own profit and advantage, to take the goods of other men into his own possession, the owner knowing nothing of the cause of it, which possession shall be avowed legal. Now this is utterly contrary unto all good government, and the principal end of the law, which is to secure unto every man the possession of his own goods, until he be legally convicted (on the best defence he can make for himself) that they ought by law to be taken from him. But in this case the legal right of one man unto his goods is transferred unto another, and that other enabled by force to take possession of them, before the true owner is once asked why it should not be so. The pretence of allowing him



him a liberty in some cases to make use of an appeal, and to sue for his own goods, when they are in the supposed legal possession of another, and he disabled for such a suit by the loss of them, as many have been, is no help in this case, nor gives the least colour of justice to this procedure.

7. To interpret the words in the act to give countenance unto this way of procedure, is contrary to the known rules of interpreting laws of this nature. And these are,

(1.) That they are not to be made snares to catch and harm men, without just cause, and a necessity thereon for publick good. To make such engines of them, is to divest them of all authority; nor can that reverence that is due unto government be preserved, unless it be manifest, that not only the laws, but also the administration of them are for publick good; so as that they are not capable, in their genuine sense, to be made snares for the hurt of men, in denying them their own just defence. Nor can there be a more dangerous inroad made on the security of the subjects, as to their property and liberty, in and by the administration of the law, than a wresting of it in any one instance unto the hurt or wrong of any. And we do know, what consequence the interpretation and undue application of penal statutes, with the wresting them unto unwarrantable severities, have had here in *England*.

(2.) It is a rule of the same importance, that in dubious cases such laws are to be interpreted according to the custom and usage of proceedings in other laws of a like nature, and not be construed unto the interest of severity, especially where 'tis unto the gain and profit of other men. And what is the method of conviction in all other laws, towards persons who do not decline a trial, is known.

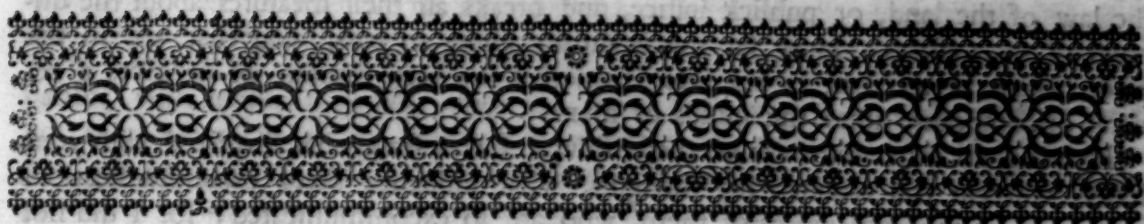
8. But besides all that hath been spoken, as unto the reason of things in general, this practice is directly contrary to, and inconsistent with the plain sense and intention of the law it self, whereof execution is pretended; for there is a gradation in the penalty annexed unto a continuance in the offence. The first conviction is for twenty pounds, the second for forty. And this will admit of no pretence, but that the person offending must know of the first conviction, that it may be a warning to him, to avoid the additional penalty, which is for continuance in the same supposed offence after the first admonition. But in the present practice, no such thing is allowed, but convictions are made for the first, second, and third offence, without any trial of what effect the first would be, which is contrary to the sense of the law, and an open wresting of it unto the ruin of men. And,

9. Lastly, these convictions are made on the oaths of the *Informers*, who at present are a sort of men so destitute of all reputation, on the account of their indigency contracted by their profligate conversation, as that men of the like qualifications are prohibited by many laws from bearing testimony in any case, tho' in all other things the process be legal, open, and plain. To admit such persons to give oaths in private, without calling or summoning them to answer, who are charged by them, and thereon to put them into an actual possession of their goods, unto their own use and advantage, is a practice which *England* hath had as yet no precedent for, nor found an especial name whereby to call it. Hereon perjuries have been multiplied among this sort of persons (whereof sundry of them have been legally convicted) to the dishonour of God, and great increase of the sin of the land. And whatever becomes of nonconformists, if the same kind of procedure should be applied unto other cases (and why may it not be so, if in this instance, the bounds of the law of nature, and the usages of mankind should be broken down?) others would find themselves aggrieved, as well as they.

These things are humbly submitted unto the consideration of the judges, justices, and juries, even all that are concerned in the administration, or execution of the law.



Church does in order unto excommunication, it deprives them of all rights in  
those which whom they are concerned, they shall see the next day shined on the  
be raised by them, so as that they know not whose names, their own, or of



think there would have any question been made about it: but since you are pleased  
to make the enquiry, I shall for the satisfaction of my readers, and for this  
unto any other end I judge it needful, give you a brief account of my judgment  
concerning these proceedings, which is the same for the substance of it, with that  
of all former persons with whom I ever wrote. A

Excommunication is the name of a divine institution of Christ, wherein, and in  
whole due and full administration, the conscience of Christians are, or ought to  
be highly concerned; and this, as for other causes, is principally because it is the  
only one, wherein the Church is visibly represented, and the power of the keys  
is for this, that the Church might be preserved in its purity, and the  
certain that the Church is made up of those who are in the full communion  
non of things and causes; As was shewed last year by the way of that  
name that we were then; but this is obtained by the law of Christ to be such  
representation of his former judgment, with a recognition of the cause which he  
will proceed upon. Therefore it is divinely instituted, in what he himself will  
do in the great day; it is the great day, it is the great day, it is the great day

thought will advise, who shall read men to Doctor Comenius to learn the way  
and manner of Christ's judgment of his Church, with the causes which he will  
proceed upon. He gives himself another account of it, *Matth. xxv. 32*, unto the  
end of the chapter; of what he there declares, there is neither name, nor thing

# LETTER

## Concerning MATTER of the

### Present EXCOMMUNICATIONS.

altered, as a thief when he is found: but for any sort of action to undertake the  
administration and execution of the sentence of excommunication against others,  
not making it their design to represent the judgment of Christ towards impenitent  
sinners, is to bid defiance to him and his Gospel. Therefore no person who  
ever, will or unlawfully good or bad, can be concerned in the excommunication.

*S I R,*  
**Y**OU judge aright, that at my last being in *London*, I did consider  
the unusual hurry of excommunications against those called Dissen-  
ters; and because of the novelty of the proceedings therein, I did  
moreover endeavour my own satisfaction, as unto the design, causes,  
and ends of them; and I found it a thing easily attainable, with-  
out difficulty, or curiosity of enquiry. For whereas there is no

covering of religion, nor any thing appertaining thereunto, save only a name or  
title cast upon them, they openly discover themselves of what sort they are, and  
what they belong unto; and among many other indecencies wherewith they are  
accompanied, one seemed to me to be very notable; and this is, the collection of  
whole droves together by summons and citations; then dealing with them in such a  
clamorous manner, as makes a representation of a publick market or fair for chaf-  
fering about souls. But that, I found, which did principally affect the minds of  
men, was the event which these proceedings do tend unto, and will produce;  
and they generally concluded, that they would be highly prejudicial, if not ruinous  
unto all trust and trade, among the peaceable subjects of the kingdom; for  
they said, that if the commissaries would do as in the old *Roman* proscriptions  
in the time of *Sylla*, and of the triumvirate afterward, and set up the names of  
all that were to be proceeded against in publick tables, to be exposed to the view  
of all; those concerned, might shift for themselves, as well as they could, and  
the residue of mankind might be at liberty to follow their own occasions; but  
whilst they retain an unreasonable reserve in their own breasts, as unto persons to  
be



be ruined by them, so as that they know not whose names, their own, or of those with whom they are concerned, they shall see the next day affixed on the Church doors, in order unto excommunication, it deprives them of all repose in the law of the land, or publick justice, and breaks all their measures about the disposal of their affairs. How far this is already come to pass, you that are in the place, know better than I; but sure I am, that the very rumour of it gives a general discomposure unto the minds of men.

Hearing no other discourse of these things, I was somewhat surprized with your letter, wherein you required my thoughts, what influence these excommunications may have on the consciences of them, who are so excommunicated; for I did not think there would have any question been made about it: but since you are pleased to make the enquiry, I shall for the satisfaction of my respects unto you (tho' as unto any other end I judge it needless) give you a brief account of my judgment concerning these proceedings, which is the same for the substance of it, with that of all sober persons with whom I ever conversed.

Excommunication is the name of a divine institution of Christ, wherein, and in whose due and just administration, the consciences of Christians are, or ought to be highly concerned; and this, as for other causes, so principally because it is the only sure representation of the future judgment of Christ himself; he did appoint it for this end, that so it might be. Providential dispensations are various, and no certain judgment can be made on them, as unto the final and eternal determination of things and causes; *No man knoweth love or hatred by the things* of that nature *that are before him*; but this is ordained by the law of Christ to be a just representation of his future judgment, with a recognition of the cause which he will proceed upon. Therefore it is divinely instructive, in what he himself will do in the great day; it is *futuri judicii præ judicium*: but he will scarcely be thought well advised, who shall send men to *Doctors Commons*, to learn the way and manner of Christ's judgment of his Church, with the causes which he will proceed upon. He giveth himself another account of it, *Matth. xxv. 32*, unto the end of the chapter; of what he there declares, there is neither name, nor thing found among men of these practices, which we treat about. The mentioning of them, would be looked on as a sedition against their authority; or else make them ashamed, as a thief when he is found: but for any sort of person to undertake the administration and execution of the sentence of excommunication against others, not making it their design to represent the judgment of Christ towards impenitent sinners, is to bid defiance to him and his Gospel. Wherefore no person whatever, wise or unwise, good or bad, can be concerned in the excommunication, in conscience, or on a religious account; I speak not only of them who are forced to suffer by them, but of them also by whom they are administered and denounced. For it is impossible that men should be so far forsaken of all understanding, as to imagine that the proceedings therein, do belong unto the Gospel, or Christian religion, any otherwise but as a debasement and corruption of it; neither is any man ever the less of the communion of the Church of *England*, by these excommunications; tho' he may by force be debarred from some advantages that belong thereunto. Neither is the communion of any Church to be valued, from which a man may be really and effectually expelled by such means: for this excommunication is not only null as to the efficacy of its sentence on the account of its male administration; but it is not in any sense that which it is called, and which it pretends to be. Idols are called gods, but we know they are nothing in the world: so is this proceeding called excommunication, but is no such thing at all. If a man should paint a rat, or an hedge-hog, and write over it, that it is a lion, no man would believe it so to be, because of its magnificent title. All that it can pretend unto is a political engine, used to apply the displeasure of some, upon an accidental advantage, unto them whose ruin they design; and therein a satisfaction unto revenge, for discountenancing their supposed interest. That there is any acting in it of the authority of Christ, any representation of his love, care and tenderness towards his Church, any thing that is instructive in his mind or will, any *preludium* of the future judgment, no man I suppose does pretend; nor I am sure can do so, without reflecting the highest dishonour imaginable on Christ himself, and the Gospel.



To make these things yet more evident, and to shew how remote the present excommunications are, from all possibility of affecting the consciences of any, I shall briefly pass through the consideration of these things, which principally belong unto them, and whereunto all their efficacy is resolved; and that which first offereth it self, is the persons by whom they are administered. The truth is, there is such a variety of scenes in this tragedy, and such different actors in it, from apparitor, with whom it begins, unto the jailor with whom it ends, that it seems not easy, whom to ascribe the animating power and authority that is in it, unto: but yet on a little consideration the matter is plain enough. The ministers of the parishes wherein the excommunicated persons are supposed to dwell, by whom the sentence of excommunication is rehearsed out of a paper from the court, have no concernment herein; for they know nothing of the causes or reasons of it, nor of the process therein, nor do pretend unto any right for the cognizance of them; nor do for the most part know the persons at all, on whose qualifications alone, the validity or invalidity of the sentence doth depend; nor can give an account to God or man of what is done, as to right and equity; and therefore I no way doubt, but that these who are learned and pious among them, do hardly bear the yoke of being made such properties in those acts and duties, which appertain unto their ministerial function; but it is known who they are, who begin the work, and carry on the process of it unto its final execution; and I shall say no more concerning them, but this alone, that how meet soever they may be for the trans-action of civil affairs, or for the skilful managing of that work herein, which they suppose committed unto them; yet as unto any thing wherein conscience may be affected with the authority of Jesus Christ, they can be of no consideration in it. If any man can but pretend to believe, that our Lord Jesus by any act, grant, law or institution of his, by any signification of his mind or will hath committed, or doth commit, the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the power of binding and loosing, of expelling out of, and admitting into his Church, unto these or such persons, he hath assuredly confidence enough to pretend unto a persuasion of whatever he pleases. They do not believe it themselves; nor among themselves pretend unto any such thing; but only a power to execute their own laws or canons. They do not judge that any personal, moral or spiritual qualifications, are required unto ecclesiastical administrations; which yet to deny, is to undermine all religion, without which they may be fit for all Church duties, who are no better than that arch-deacon of *Oxford*, who being charged with immoralities in his conversation, justified himself by the soundness of his faith, affirming that he believed three Gods in one person; and besides he believed all that God himself did believe. Let a man out of interest, or fear, or ignorant superstition, strive never so much to affect his conscience with the excommunications of such men, he will never be able to effect it.

But be the personal qualifications of those intended, what they please, the question is, how they came by that power and authority herein, which they pretend unto? They are chancellors, archdeacons, commissaries, officials, with their court attendants, of whom we speak. I confess these horrid names, with the reports concerning them, and their power, are enough to terrify poor harmless men, and make them fear some evil from them. But excommunication is that which no man knows on what grounds to fear, from these names, titles, and offices: for that is the name of a divine ordinance instituted by Christ in the Gospel, to be administered according to the rule and law thereof; but these names, and those unto whom they do belong, are utterly foreign unto the Scriptures, and as unto the work, to the practice of the Church for a thousand years; what therefore is done by them of this kind, must of necessity be utterly null, seeing that as such, they have no place in the Church themselves by the authority of Christ. But however it be undeniably evident, that they have no relation unto the Scripture, nor can have any authority from Christ, by virtue of any law or institution of his, nor countenance given unto them by any practice of the primitive Church; yet what they do in this kind, being pretended acts of power and authority, an authority for them must be pleaded by them. But then it may be justly demanded of them, what it is; of what nature and kind? How it is communicated unto them, or derived by them from others? This is that which those who are excommunicated by them,  
are



are principally concerned to enquire into, and, which themselves in the first place are obliged to declare and evince. Unless men are satisfied in conscience, that those who act against them, have just authority so to do, or in what they do, it is utterly impossible they should be concerned in conscience in what is done against them, or be any ways obliged thereby. Here therefore they abide until they are satisfied in this just and necessary demand.

But here all things are in confusion; they can declare neither what authority is required unto what they do, nor how they come to possess that which they pretend unto. If it be from Christ, how comes it to operate on the outward concerns of men, their liberties and estates? If it be merely of man, whence do they give the name, and pretence of a divine ordinance unto what they do? If any should follow the clew in this labyrinth, it is to be feared that it would lead them into the abyss of Papal omnipotency.

As they exercise this power in courts of external jurisdiction, and forms of law, they will not deny, I suppose, but that it is from the King; but why do they not then act that power in the King's name? for what is not done by his name, is not done by his authority. Ministers do not preach, nor administer sacraments in the name of the King, for they do it not by his authority, or by virtue of authority derived from him; nor do parents govern their children or families in his name, but their own; because authority for it, is their own by the law of God and nature; but that exercise of power which externally affects the civil rights and liberties of men, must be in the King's name, or the foundations of the government of the nation are shaken.— But I make it not my concernment what name or stile they use in their courts. Let it be granted for their own security, that they have all their power and authority from the King, it must be therewithal granted of what nature it is, namely, civil, and not spiritual, but why then doth what they do, not go under the name of a civil order, constitution, or penalty, but of an ordinance or institution of Jesus Christ? Are not these things in their own nature everlastingly distinct? and is not conscience hereby fully absolved from any respect unto it, as such an ordinance, which in this supposition it neither is, nor can be? It is easily discernable, how these things tend unto the utter confusion of all things in religion.

If it be said, that the power of it, as it is excommunication, is originally seated in the prelates, by virtue of their office, and is communicated unto these sort of persons, by commission, delegation, or deputation, under their seals; it will yield no relief: for this fiction of the delegation of office power, or the power of office, unto any, without giving them the office it self, whereunto that power belongs, is gross and intolerable. Let it be tried, whether the bishops can delegate the power of ministerial preaching the word, and administration of the sacraments, unto any persons, without giving them the office of the ministry. If excommunication be an act of office power, authority to administer it cannot be delegated unto any without the office it self, whereunto it doth belong; for these things are inseparable. I certainly believe it is the duty and concernment of some men, to state proceedings of this nature on better foundations, that the exercise of such solemn duties of Christian religion be not exposed to utter contempt, nor men led by a discovery of false pretences of divine institutions, to despise the things themselves that are so abused.

It were easy from many other considerations, to demonstrate the nullity of these mens pretended authority, with respect unto excommunication, as it is an ordinance of the Gospel, in which respect alone, the consciences of men are concerned; and as unto their power over the civil rights and interests of men, those troubled by them, must shift as well as they can.

But yet further, the manner of the administration of the present excommunications doth evidence their invalidity and nullity. That which they pretend unto, as hath been said, is a divine ordinance, an institution of Jesus Christ; and this declares in general how it ought to be administered by them who have authority for it, and are called thereunto. For it hence followeth, that it ought to be accompanied with an humble reverence of him and his authority, diligent attendance unto his law, and the rule of his word in all things, with solemn, reiterated, invocation



vocation of his holy name, for his presence, guidance, and assistance: where these things are neglected in the administration of any divine ordinances, it is nothing but the taking the name of God in vain, and the profanation of his worship. It may be some will despise these considerations; I cannot help it, they do it at their utmost peril; it is conscience alone which I respect in this discourse; they who have any such thing, will think these things reasonable.

Again, the especial nature of this institution doth require an especial frame of mind in its administration; for it is the cutting off of a member of the same body with them, which cannot be without sense and sorrow. To cut off any from a Church, who was never a member of it by his own consent, nor doth judge himself so to be, is ridiculous; hence St. Paul calls the execution of this censure, *bewailing*, 2 Cor. xii. 21. denominating the whole action from the frame of mind wherewith it ought to be performed; and he that shall dare to decree or denounce this sentence, without sorrow and compassion for the sin, and on the person of him that is excommunicated, plays a game with things sacred for his advantage, and shall answer for his presumption.

Besides, as was before observed, it is an instituted representation of the Lord Christ, and his judgment in and of the Church at the last day. If the consideration hereof be once out of the minds of them by whom it is administered, they must unavoidably err in all that they do; much more if it be never once in them; but this they ought to take on their souls and consciences, that what they do, Christ himself, if present, would do, and will do the same at the last day; for so he will deal with all impenitent sinners, he will denounce them accursed, and deliver them to Satan. There is undoubtedly required from hence a reverential care and circumspection in all that is done here: to make a false representation of Christ in these things, that is, his wisdom, authority, holiness, love, and care towards the Church, is the worst and most deformed image that can be set up. What higher indignity can be offered to his gracious holiness, than to act and represent him as furious, proud, passionate, unmerciful, and delighting in the ruin of those that openly profess faith in him, and love unto him? God forbid that we should think that he hath any concern in such ways and proceedings.

Whereas also the next end of this censure is not destruction, but edification, or the repentance and recovery of lapsed sinners, it ought to be accompanied with continual fervent prayers for this end. This the nature of the thing itself requireth, this the Scripture directs unto, and such was the practice of the primitive Church.

If we are Christians, we are concerned in these things as much as we are in the glory of Christ, and the salvation of our own souls. If we only make a pretence of religious duties, if we only erect an image of them for our own advantage, we may despise them, but at our peril. How well these things are observed in the present excommunications, is notorious. Once to mention them, is to deserve a second thunderbolt. An account of them as to matter of fact, will be shortly given; at present I shall only say, That there is not any transaction of affairs in any kind amongst men civilized, wherein there is a greater appearance and evidence of turbulent passions, acting themselves in all manner of irregularities, more profaneness of expression, more insolent insultations, more brawling, litigious proceedings, more open mixtures of money demanded in pretended administrations of right and equity, than there are in the publick proceedings about them. Shall any Christian suppose that the holy Spirit of God, on whom alone depends the efficacy of all divine ordinances unto their proper end, will immix his holy operations in or with this furious exertion of the lusts of men? If this be looked on as the complement of christian discipline, or the last and utmost actings of this authority of Christ towards men in this world, it must needs be a temptation unto men of atheistical inclinations: certainly greater scandal cannot be given; and it is the interest of some, at least for the preservation of a veneration to their office, to dispose of proceedings in this case, in such a way and manner, as may administer occasion of consideration unto them concerned, and not be carried on as at present, with laughter, indignation, and confusion; and if *Dissenters* are to be destroyed, it is desired, that the work were left unto the penal statutes, which as now prosecuted and interpreted, are sufficient for it; rather than that the name of religion, and a divine ordinance, should merely for that end be exposed to contempt.



The last thing that I shall trouble you with at present, is the consideration of the persons against whom the present excommunications are blustered, with the pretended causes of them. These are they whom they call *Dissenters*, concerning whom we may enquire what they are, and the cause of this pretended ecclesiastical severity towards them. And as unto the first part of the enquiry, they are such as believe and make open profession of all the articles of the Christian Faith; they do so, as they are declared in the Scripture; nor is the contrary charged on them. There is nothing determined by the ancient councils to belong unto Christian Faith, which they disbelieve; nor do they own any doctrine condemned by them. They profess an equal interest of consent in the harmony of protestant confessions, with any other protestants whatever. They own the doctrine of the Church of *England* as established by law, in nothing receding from it; nor have they any novel, or uncatholick opinion of their own.

It is therefore utterly impossible to separate them from the communion of the catholick Church in faith, or to cast them from that rock whereon they are built thereby. They do also attend unto divine worship in their own assemblies; and herein they do practise all that is agreed on by all Christians in the world, and nothing else; for they do not only make the Scripture the sole rule of their worship, so as to omit nothing prescribed therein to that purpose, nor to observe any thing prohibited thereby; but their worship is the very same with that of the catholick Church in all ages; nothing do they omit that was ever used by it, nothing do they observe that was ever condemned by it; and this must be the principle and measure of catholick union in worship, if ever there be any such thing in the earth; to expect it in any other observances, is vain and foolish. Offering prayers and praises to God in the name of Jesus Christ, reading the holy Scripture, and expounding of it, singing of psalms to God, preaching of the word, with the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, in a religious observation of the Lord's day, unto these ends; all according as God doth enable them by his Spirit, is the sum and substance of the worship of the catholick Church, wherein all Christians are agreed. These things the Scripture doth prescribe, and these things the Church in all ages hath observed. All differences about this worship, which have filled the world with inhuman contentions, arose from mens arbitrary addition of forms, rites, modes, ceremonies, languages, cringings, adorations, which they would have observed in it, whereof the Scripture is silent, and primitive antiquity utterly ignorant. And it may be it will be one day understood, that the due observance of this catholick worship, according as God enableth any thereunto, leaving others at liberty to use such helps unto their devotion as they shall think meet, is the only communion of worship in the Church, which the Scripture requires, or which is possible to be attained. About the imposition of other things, there ever were, since they were, and ever will be, endless contentions. Wherefore these *Dissenters* practising nothing in the worship of God, but what is approved by all Christians, particularly by the Church of *England*, omitting nothing that either the Scripture, or catholick tradition directs unto, they are, notwithstanding this pretended excommunication, secure of communion with the catholick Church in evangelical worship.

Moreover, they plead that their conversation is unblameable; that they are peaceable in the civil government, and useful among their neighbours; if they do evil in these things, let them that prosecute them bear witness of the evil; but if they do well, why are they smitten? If they can be charged with any immoralities, with any disobedience unto the rule and precept of the Gospel; those by whom they are thus prosecuted, are highly concerned, if not in conscience, yet in honour and interest, to manage the charge against them, that some countenance may be given unto their proceedings. For the law is not made, as penal, for a righteous man, but for the lawless, and disobedient; for the ungodly, and for sinners; for unholý, and profane; and if it be otherwise with the laws about these excommunications, they neither belong to, nor are derived from the law of God.

There are indeed great clamours against them, that they are Schismatics, and Separatists, and things of the like nature; that is, that they are *Dissenters*; but in this case, the whole force of any inference from hence, is built on this supposition, That it is the will of Christ, that those who profess faith in him, and obedience unto him unblameably, should be excluded from an interest in, and participation of



these ordinances of divine worship, which are of his own institution, who will not comply with, and observe such rights and practices in that worship, as are not so, but confessedly of human invention. But no colour of proof can be given hereunto; for it is directly contrary unto express Scripture rule, to the example of the apostolical Churches, and unheard of in the world, before the branded usurpation of *Victor*, bishop of *Rome*. An assertion of it, is to prostitute the wisdom, authority, and love of Christ towards his Disciples, unto the wills of men, oftentimes prepossessed with darkness, ignorance, and superstition, and other lusts, as shall be more fully manifested, if there be occasion. Let any colour be given unto this supposition from Scripture or antiquity, and the whole cause shall be given up; yet thus is it, and no otherwise, in the matter of the present excommunications; persons of all sorts, every way sound in the faith, unreprouable in the catholick worship of the Gospel, professing love and obedience unto Jesus Christ, without blame, are excluded, what lies in them, who manage these ordinances of divine worship, which the Lord Christ hath appointed and enjoined, without pretence of any other cause or reason, but only their not observance, in that worship, of what he hath not appointed. He that can believe this to be the will of Christ, neither knoweth him, nor his will as it is revealed in his word; and the consciences of men are sufficiently secure from being concerned in that, wherein such an open defiance is bid unto evangelical precepts and rules, with apostolical examples.

And farther, to manifest the iniquity of these proceedings, whilst these *Dissenters* are thus dealt withal, all sorts of persons, ignorant, profane, haters of godliness, and openly wicked in their lives, are allowed in the full communion of the Church, without any disciplinary admonition or controul. But as this serves to acquit them from any concernment in what is done against them; so nothing can be invented that tends more directly to harden men in their sins and impenitency; for whilst there is a pretence of Church censures, they will be apt to think, that they are sufficiently approved of Christ and the Church, seeing their displeasure is no way declared against them; so they are not *Dissenters*, they have reason to judge that they are safe here, and shall be so to eternity; let them look to themselves who deserve to be excommunicated. Is this the rule of the Gospel? Is this the discipline of Christ? Is this the representation of his future judgment? Is this the way and manner of the exercise of his authority in the Church, a declaration of what he owns, and what alone he disavows? God forbid that such thoughts should have any countenance given unto them. Ecclesiastical laws have been always looked on as cobwebs, that catch the smaller flies, whilst the greater break them at their pleasure, but amongst those lesser, to spare those that are noxious or poisonous, and to cast the net over the innocent and harmless, is that which the spider gives no pattern of, nor can imitate.

I shall not mention the avowed end and design of these present excommunications; only I shall say, they are such, as many good men tremble to consider the horrible profanation of things sacred, which they manifest to be in them.

There are also many other things which evidence the nullity of these proceedings, which may be pleaded if there be occasion; what hath already been spoken, is abundantly sufficient to satisfy my engagement unto you, namely, That the consciences of men are not at all concerned in the present excommunications.

It may be it will be said, that all this while we have been doing just nothing, or that which is to no purpose at all, as not concerning the present case; for these of whom we treat, pretend no power in *foro interiori*, or the court of conscience, or unto nothing that should immediately affect it. Their authority is only in *foro exteriori*, in the court of the Church, which it seems is at *Doctors Commons*: wherefore by their sentence of excommunication, they oblige men only unto their outward concernments; as unto what concerns conscience, they leave that unto the preachers of the word. It may be it will be so pleaded; but before they quit their hands well of this business, they will understand, that excommunication itself is nothing but an especial way of the application of the word unto the consciences of sinners, unto their edification; and that which is not so, pretend what it will, is nothing at all; unto the dispensers therefore of the word, it doth alone belong; and whereas the Apostle tells us, that the weapons of our christian warfare, are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ; they seem herein to say, that the weapons of their warfare are carnal and mighty through



through the aid of some body, to cast men into prison, or to bring their persons into captivity. And indeed this outward court of theirs, is part of that court without the temple, which is trodden down by the *Gentiles*, and shall not be measured in the restoration of the worship of God; yea, the distinction itself is silly, if any thing be intended by this outward court, but only the outward declaration of what is, or is supposed to be effected in the inward, or the mind and consciences of men. But let it be what it will; those who have neither name, nor place, nor office in the Church by divine institution, who attend not at all in what they do unto any rule of the Scripture; nor can, nor do pretend any authority from Christ, in and for what they do, are no way to be heeded in this matter, but only as the instruments of external compulsion, which for the sake of the publick peace, is to be submitted unto with quietness and patience.

I find, I confess, by the books with me, sent us weekly into the country, that in this state of things some of the Reverend Clergy do manifest great compassion towards the *Dissenters*, in writing and publishing many discourses containing persuasives unto, and arguments for conformity, whereby they may be freed from their troublesome circumstances: but I must needs commend their prudence in the choice of the season for this work, as much as their charity in the work itself. For the conformity they press, needs no other recommendation at this time; nor need they use any other arguments for it, but only that it is better than being hanged, or kept in perpetual durance, or stifled in prisons, or beggar'd, they and their families, or be starved in exile. And it hath been always observed, that arguments which march with halberts, bills, staves, serjeants, bailiffs, writs, warrants, and *capias's*, are very forcible and prevalent.

But I have done, and shall leave it unto others to declare what mischiefs do ensue on these proceedings, on civil accounts, and what an inroad is made by them on the government of the kingdom. For a new tenure is erected by them, whereon all men must hold their birthright privileges, especially that which is the root whereon they all do grow, namely, their personal liberty. They hold them no longer by the law of the land, nor can pretend unto security, whilst they forfeit them not by that law; they are all put into the power of chancellors, archdeacons, commissaries, and officials; they may deprive them of them all at their pleasure, against the protection of that law under which they are born, and which hath been looked on, as the only rule and measure of the subjects liberties, privileges, and possessions. These things tend not only to the disturbance, but the ruin of all peace and trust amongst men, and of all good government in the world.

And if they should excommunicate all that by the law of Christ are to be excommunicated on the one hand, and all that are to be so by their own law on the other, and then procure *capias's* for them all, it is to be feared, the King might want subjects to defend his realms against his enemies, unless he should do as they did of old at *Rome* in great distresses, open the goals, and arm the prisoners; or it may be, the lesser part would at length find it troublesome to keep the greater in prison. But these things concern not you nor me. I beg your excuse, as not knowing whether you will judge this hasty writing too little for the cause, or too much for a letter. As it is, accept it from,

Sir,

Your &c.

J. O.

A DIS-




# DISCOURSE

## Concerning the

# ADMINISTRATION

OF

## CHURCH CENSURES.

**Quest. 1.**  **AY** a true Church of Christ err or mistake in the administration of Church censures?

**A**nsw. A true Church of Christ may err and mistake in the administration of the censures, or any act of discipline; whereby members of it, who are true members of Christ, may be injured, and sundry other inconveniencies may ensue. And this is not unduly supposed:

1. Because no particular Church is absolutely infallible, either in doctrine or administrations, especially in such points or things as overthrow not the foundation of faith or worship.

2. Because Churches are more obnoxious and liable to error and mistake in their administrations and discipline, than in doctrine. For all doctrines of truth are absolutely determined and revealed in the Scripture, so that there is no principle, means, nor cause of mistake about them, but what is only in the minds of men that inquire into them and after them. But the administration of the censures of the Church hath respect unto many fallible mediums, requiring testimonies, evidences, and circumstances, which of themselves may lead a Church acting in sincerity into many mistakes; especially considering how much in the dark unto us for the most part are the principles, causes, and ends of actions, the frames of mens spirits in and after them; all which in such cases deserve much consideration.

3. Churches have erred in not administering the censures of the Gospel, according unto order and their duty, *1 Cor. v. 2.*

4. The experience of all ages confirms the truth of this supposition. The first Church censure, after the death of the Apostles, that is remaining on any record, was that of the Church of *Corinth* against some of their elders; wherein how they



miscarried, is evident from the *Epistle* of the Church of *Rome* unto them about that matter.

*Corollary.* In case any question arise about the administration of any Church censure in a Church of Christ, it ought to be very jealous, lest it have in matter or manner miscarried therein; seeing absolutely they may do so, and seeing there are so many ways and means whereby they may actually be induced into mistakes.

*Question 2.* Is it necessary that such male administrations be rectified?

*Answer.* It is necessary such male administrations should be rectified, by some way or means of Christ's appointment. And it is so,

1. First on the part of the censures themselves. And that,

(1.) Because of their nullity; for they are null, and bind not.

[1.] *In foro cæli.* They bind not in heaven; for the Lord Christ ratifieth nothing in heaven, but what is done in his name, by his commission, and according to his word. In some or all of which every male administration faileth.

[2.] *Not in foro conscientie:* for conscience is not bound, nor will bind on mere external, ecclesiastical authority, where the person is indeed free, and judgeth himself to be so according unto rule.

Only such censures may be said to bind for a season, in some cases, in the Church, but that *quoad ordinem exteriorem & mere ecclesiasticum*, with respect unto outward order, that the peace of the Church be not troubled, until mistakes may be rectified; but not *quoad ordinem internum & mere spiritualem*, with reference unto the dependance of the whole Church on Christ the head.

(2.) Because of the consequents of them. Disadvantage to the Gospel, prejudice to the ways of Christ, and the utter impairing the authority of all Church censures must needs ensue, if there be no way to rectify such mistakes, or if they are left unrectified; as may easily be manifested.

2. This is also necessary on the part of the Church, supposed to have erred. For whereas all Church power is for edification, that which is unduly put forth and exercised, is rather for destruction; the guilt whereof every Church ought to rejoyce in being delivered from; especially considering that there is much more evil in *condemning the righteous*, than in *acquitting the wicked*, though both of them be an abomination.

3. On the part of the persons unduly, or unjustly separated from the Church by such censures. This is so evident that it need no confirmation.

4. On the account of all other Churches, holding communion with the Church which hath (as it is supposed to have) miscarried. The reasons hereof will afterwards be made to appear.

*Corollary.* This relief, by what means soever it is to be obtained, is of great use to the Churches of Christ, and of great concernment unto their peace and edification.

*Question 3.* How may such administrations be rectified?

*Answer.* The rectifying such male administrations, may be (and is ordinarily) no otherwise to be expected) by the advice and counsel of other Churches, walking in the same fellowship and ordinances of the Gospel with that Church so failing, as is supposed. And this to be given upon the hearing and understanding of the whole proceedings of that Church in the administration supposed irregular.

This being the principal thing aimed at, must be further considered. And,

1. The way, or means, whereby other Churches come to the knowledge of such supposed miscarriages in any Church of their communion, may be considered. Now this is either,

(1.) By publick report. So the *Israelites* took notice of the fact of the *Reubenites* and *Gadites* in building an altar, which thereupon they sent to enquire about: *They heard say they had done it*, Josh. xxii. 11. So the Apostle took notice of the miscarriage of the Church of *Corinth* in the case of the incestuous person, 1 Cor. v. 5. And this is a sufficient ground of inquiry, or of desiring an account of any Church, in such cases.

(2.) By information of particular persons, whom they judge holy and faithful. So the Apostle took notice of the dissensions in the Church of *Corinth*: *They were declared unto him by them of the house of Cloe*, 1 Cor. i. 11.

(3.) By



(3.) By an account given unto them by any Church, requiring their advice in any case of difficulty, either before or after the administration of censures. So the Church at *Antioch* gave an account of their troubles and differences to the Church at *Jerusalem*, Acts xv.

(4.) By the addresses of the persons injured, or supposing themselves to be so; which to make, whilst they judge themselves innocent, is their indispensable duty; either directly, by seeking advice or counsel from them; or by desiring admission into the fellowship of the Gospel with them, which they cannot grant, without an inquiry into the causes of their separation from any other Church, or society.

*Corollary.* Where there is a concurrence of the most ways, or means of information, there ought to be the more diligence in the inquiry.

Hence it follows, that it is the duty of Churches walking in the same order and fellowship of the Gospel, upon such information or complaint, as beforementioned, of any undue administration of Church censures, especially of excommunication by any Church amongst themselves, to inquire by their messengers into the cause and manner of it, to the end that they may give their joint advice and counsel in the matter. And it is the duty of the Church complain'd of, or informed against, to give them an account of all their proceedings in that case, with their reasons for their procedure, and to hearken unto, and consider the advice, that shall be offered and given unto them.

2. This will appear sufficiently confirmed, if we consider, in order unto a right judgment of the grounds whereon this way and practice is asserted,

(1.) That this advice of Churches in communion to be given and taken, is no ordinary or standing ordinance of the Church as to its practice, though it be as unto its right; but is only to be made use of in extraordinary cases, and such as should not occur, although they will, and for this cause it is more sparingly mentioned in the Scripture.

(2.) That it is, and may be fully proved to be the duty of all Churches, by previous advice with other Churches in cases of difficulty, to prevent this consequent counsel, which being after a sentence given, must needs be attended with many difficulties.

(3.) That the practice of the Churches, as to discipline, is no longer recorded in the Scripture, than they had the direction and help of the Apostles, which supplied all extraordinary emergencies among them; so that many instances of this practice amongst them are not to be expected, and it is of the care and wisdom of our Lord *Jesus* that we have any.

(4.) That we must be here contented with such arguments and testimonies, as we act upon in other ordinances and things belonging to the worship and order of the Churches; such as the distribution of elders into teaching and ruling, the administration of the sacraments by officers only, gesture in the sacrament of the supper, observation of the first day of the week, and the like.

These things being premised, the order above expressed, is confirmed.

I. From the light and law of nature, with the unalterable reason of the thing it self. Hence are Churches directed into this order and practice.

There is somewhat that is moral in all ordinances. Some of them are wholly so as to their matter and substance, and founded in the light of nature, being only directed as to their principle, manner, and end, in the Gospel; such is excommunication it self, as might easily be made to appear. And from hence a direction unto duty, and an indispensable obligation unto obedience doth arise. That which is moral in any ordinance doth no less oblige us to an observation of it, than that which is of mere institution. And it obligeth us because it is moral. And the Lord Christ being in all things the Lord of our consciences, what we do therein, we do it in obedience unto him.

Now that the order established is thus grounded and warranted, appears by the ensuing rules, taken from the light of nature.

1. *Quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus tractari debet.* All men are to consider that, wherein the concernment of all doth lie, according to their respective interests. What is the ground and reason, why all the members of a Church do consider, determine, give their counsel and consent, in the case of any persons being cast out of their society? It is warranted by virtue of this rule. They all have communion

with



with such a person, and must all withdraw communion from him, and therefore must consider the reason of his excommunication or cutting off. Now a Church in its censures doth not eject any one from the enjoyment of ordinances numerically only, that is, in that one society; but specifically, that is, from the ordinances of Christ in all Churches. Hence it becomes the concernment of other Churches, even as many as the person ejected may seek communion from; and therefore it is to be considered by them, with respect unto their own duty of walking towards him.

2. *Cujus est judicare, ejus est cognoscere.* Whoever is to judge, is to take cognizance of the fact, and the reason of it. This is to be done according to the several interests that men may have in the matter under consideration; which in some is of jurisdiction, which in this case we admit not of; in others of counsel and advice. Now other Churches are not allowed in this case to be merely passive and indifferent, but must make a determination in it. This is evident on supposition of the injured person's offering himself to their communion: for they must reject him, or receive him. In both they judge, and therein must take cognizance, by hearing the matter from the Church; and so on both sides. And unless this be allowed, no Church can, or ought to expect, that any other Church will reject from communion any whom they reject, merely because they are rejected; unless they suppose their judgment to be absolutely a rule unto any other Churches to walk by, in their observation of the commands and institutions of Christ.

3. On the part of the persons supposed to be injured, every man by the law of nature is obliged to undertake *inculpata sui tutelam*, the just defence of his own innocency, by all lawful ways and means. And as absolutely the way, means, and measure of this defence is left unto a man's own prudence; so there is a rule given unto it, wherever the glory of God, or of the good of his neighbour is concerned: if either of these suffer by his wrong, he is obliged to vindicate his own innocency, nor is at liberty to suffer false imputations to lie upon him. It is in such cases a man's sin not to do so. And in the case under consideration this can be done only by an address unto other persons, for their assistance according to their interest. An interest of jurisdiction in civil courts, or in Churches, in this case there is none. The interest of private persons herein is of compassion, prayer, and private advice; the interest of Churches is a cognizance of the cause, with advice and judgment thereon. And for persons or Churches not to give assistance in this case, according to the truth and equity, is their sin.

That these are principles of the light of nature, and the natural reason of such things, appears from the general allowance of them so to be, and their constant practice amongst all men, walking according to that light and law.

*Corollary.* If Churches, as they are assemblies and societies of men in communion for the same end, observe not the indispensable rules of societies, they cannot as such be ordinarily preserved in their being and communion.

II. The way and order laid down is directed unto, warranted, and confirmed by general rules of the Scripture.

1. On the part of the Church supposed to err in its administrations.

There are sundry general rules, which declare it to be their duty to give an account unto other Churches, of their proceedings therein, and to consider their advice. Some of these may be named. As,

(1.) That they give none offence to the Churches of God, 1 Cor. x. 32. Give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed, 2 Cor. vi. 3. Upon a supposition, or information, or complaint of male administration of any ordinance, offence may be taken, and that, if accompanied (as it may be) with much appearing evidence, justly. And in this case the Church hath no way to clear itself from having indeed given offence, but by giving an account of their proceedings and the reason thereof. And without this it cannot be avoided; but that offences will be multiplied amongst the Churches of Christ, and that to the utter ruin of their mutual communion. Thus when Peter, by the special command and direction of God, went and preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, many, not knowing the grounds of his so doing, nor his warrant for it, took offence at it, and charged him with irregular walking, Acts xi. 2, 3. In this case, he doth not defend himself by his apostolical authority and privilege, nor in a few words tell them he had a warrant for what he did; but to remove all doubts, questions, and causes of offence,



fence, he distinctly repeats the whole matter, and all the circumstances of it: an example of so great importance, that the holy Ghost thought meet at large to express his account and defence, though the matter of it was set down immediately before, *Acts chap. x. and xi.*

(2.) That they be ready always to give an answer (that is, an account) of the hope that is in them (and consequently of their practice suitable thereunto) with meekness and fear, 1 Pet. iii. 15. This proves it a *minore ad majus*: If they should be ready thus to answer every man, much more many Churches of God, and that in and about things of their mutual edification.

(3.) That in particular they clear themselves, when suffering under any imputation, or being in danger of so doing. *What carefulness it wrought in you, what clearing of your selves: in all things you have approved your selves to be clear in this matter,* 2 Cor. vii. 11. And this on many accounts is the duty of a Church in the case proposed: the glory of God, the honour of Christ, their own peace and edification, with the peace and credit of all other Churches, require it of them. Nor can this duty be any otherwise performed, but by this giving an account of their own proceedings, and receiving the advice of other Churches therein. And if this be not done freely, with readiness and submission of mind, there is no way left to preserve the peace and communion of Churches. Those who suppose they may in such cases act in a way of jurisdiction and Church power, can attain the end by them aimed at, by virtue of the censures which they do administer. But in this way of counsel and advice, unless those who are concerned to give an account of themselves, will do it with meekness, gentleness, mutual trust and confidence suitable unto the conduct of the spirit of Christ, in obedience unto his institutions, the whole end of it will be in danger to be frustrated.

2. On the part of other Churches.

(1.) All Churches, walking in the same order and fellowship of the Gospel, are mutually debtors to each other for their good and edification. *Their debtors they are,* Rom. xv. 27. And this debt in this case can no otherwise be paid, but by the way prescribed.

(2.) What the Apostles did, might do, and ought to do towards one another, who were all equal by virtue of their common interest in the same work, that one Church may do, and ought to do towards another, or many Churches towards one: but one Apostle might take cognizance of the ways and walking of another, and withstand, advise, or reprove him, if in any thing he failed, and walked not with a right foot, *Gal. ii. 11, 14, 15.*

*Corollary.* General rules, containing the grounds and reasons of particular institutions, are sure guidance and direction in and unto their observation.

III. The way and order expressed is warranted by necessity; as that without which the peace of communion, and edification of the Churches cannot be preserved and carried on. As,

1. On the part of the Church whose administrations are questioned. The persons censur'd (which is ordinary) may in their own vindication, or by way of undue reflection, not to be discovered without a just examination, impair their reputation with other Churches, or many members of them, whereby it may suffer and be exposed to sundry inconveniencies. In this case a Church can have no relief, but by reporting the matter unto other Churches, so seeking their advice and counsel, whereby they may receive great encouragement, comfort, and boldness in the Lord, if found to have proceeded according unto rule.

2. On the part of other Churches. A Church may either causelessly, or with just cause, cast out or withdraw communion from such a number of their members, as bearing themselves on their own innocency and right, may continue in a society, and plead that the power, authority, and privilege of the Church doth abide with them. How in this case shall other Churches know with which of these societies they may and ought to hold communion, unless they may and ought to examine and consider the causes of the dissention between them? And they may justly, and ought to withhold communion from that party of them, which shall refuse to tender their case unto such consideration.

3. On the part of the persons supposed to be injured; and that either for their restoration, or their conviction and humiliation. For,



(1.) If they are innocent, it is meet that they should be heard, as the *Israelites* heard the *Reubenites*; and necessary that they should be restored. Now it being supposed that the Church which hath rejected them, will not rescind their own act without new light and evidence, which for many reasons is not like to spring from among themselves; this is the only way left for that necessary relief, which the Lord Christ requires to be given. For what is our duty towards a person repenting, in reference to his restoration, is certainly our duty towards a person who hath not sinned, when his innocency shall be discovered.

(2.) For their conviction and humiliation, if they be found offenders. Whilst they see not the right regularity of the Church's proceedings with them; whilst they are able to justify themselves in their own consciences, and their hearts condemn them not, it is not to be expected that the sentence of excommunication, which works only by the means of mens light and conviction, will have its effect upon them. But when there shall be the concurrence of many Churches, in the approbation of the censure inflicted on them, which probably will be accompanied with a contribution of new light and conviction, it is a most useful means to bring them to humiliation and repentance. It was an aggravation of the censure inflicted on the incestuous *Corinthian*, that it was given out against him by many *2 Cor. ii. 6.* that is, by the common consent of the Church: and it will add thereto when the censure shall be confirmed and approved by the concurrent advice of many Churches.

*Corollary.* The Lord Christ having provided all things necessary for the peace and edification of his Church, in all things that are evidently of that importance, his mind and will is diligently to be enquired after.

IV. This whole order and practice is grounded on especial warrant and approbation, recorded *Acts xv.* Concerning which we may observe,

1. That the occasion there mentioned fell out in the providence of God, and the practice upon it was guided by the Holy Ghost, that it might be an example and rule for the Churches of Christ, in cases of a like concernment unto them in all ages, and so hath the force and warranty of an institution. As it was in the case, that gave occasion unto deacons, *Acts iv.* a matter of fact wherein was some disorder, rectified by a practice answering the necessity of the Churches, became an institution for order in all future ages.

2. That in that synod things were not determined by immediate inspiration, but the truth was searched out, and the mind of the Holy Ghost searched into by reasonings, arguings, and the consideration of Scripture testimonies, whereby they were guided in the conclusion and determination.

3. That the institution and rule given is not in its exercise to be confined to that particular case, and instance there mentioned (which to do would overthrow many other rules and observations which we admit) but it is to be extended in proportion, and parity of reason, unto all cases of a like nature. For the reason of any law is the rule of its interpretation; and so it is of any institution. That that which gives offence and trouble unto any Church, that wherein many Churches are concerned, that which in any Church hinders edification, and disturbs the faith or peace of any of its members, whether it be in doctrine or practice, that is not, or cannot be composed in any one Church, should be considered, advised upon, and determined by more Churches holding communion together, and meetings for that purpose by their messengers, is the sense, meaning, design and importance of this institution.

*Corollary.* To deny an institution of so great necessity to the peace and edification of the Churches, will give great countenance unto men, who supposing such defects, are ready to supply them with their own inventions.

V. The order asserted is confirmed by the practice of the first Churches, after the decease of the Apostles. For when the Church of *Corinth* had by an undue exercise of discipline deposed some of their elders, the Church of *Rome* taking cognizance of it, wrote unto them, reproving their rashness, and advised their restoration. And when the Church of *Antioch* was afterward troubled with the pride, and false opinions of *Paulus Samosatenus*, the neighbouring bishops or elders came unto the Church, and joined their consent in his deposition.



Some things are, or may be objected unto this course of proceeding amongst the Churches of Christ, which shall therefore be briefly considered and answered.

*Objection 1.* This way of proceeding will abridge the liberty, and destroy the privileges of particular Churches, which ought to be carefully preserved as the ground and foundation of the whole superstruction of Church order.

*Answer 1.* Particular Churches have certainly no liberties or privileges, that are inconsistent with, and do contradict either the light of nature, moral equity, general rules of the Scripture, or the reasons and ends of all institutions, and of the edification of the whole body of Christ. And on these, as hath been declared, is this way and course of proceeding grounded.

2. Other Churches taking care about their own concernments and duty according to the will and appointment of Christ, namely, in considering whom they receive into, and whom they are to deny communion unto, with the cause thereof, do not, nor can truly abridge the liberties or privileges of any Church whatever. For the duty of many Churches will never interfere with the due liberty of any one. And this is all upon the matter that they do in this case; which must be granted them, unless we will say, that the actings of one Church, and those it may be irregular, shall not only abridge all other Churches of their liberty, but hinder them also from performing their duty.

3. I do not see how counsel and advice can abridge the liberty of any Church or person. Certainly to guide, direct, and assist any in the acting of their liberty, is not to abridge it, but rather to strengthen it. For liberty acted not according to rule, is licentiousness. A man in the use of his liberty may be going to do himself some notable injury; he that shall stop him by counsel and persuasion, with the prevalency and authority of reason, doth not take away his liberty, but guides him aright in the use of it.

4. Wherein is the abridgment pretended? Is a Church by this means hindered from the free use and acting of its own judgment, in taking in what members it seems good, in watching over them according to the rule, in admonishing, reproofing, or casting them out, if they find just and sufficient cause so to do? To hinder, or obstruct a Church in any of these acts or actings by any authority, sentence, or determination, by any act or acts whatever, is utterly disclaimed: so that this is but a pretence.

5. When a case hath difficulty in it, and such mostly, if not universally have all cases, wherein there will be found the least appearance of a grievance in the execution of censures, or pretence for seeking redress; a Church hath not liberty, hath no privilege to secure it from previous seeking the advice of other Churches, which is their duty by many rules of Scripture. We must not pretend unbounded liberty against known duty. And as a Church doth not seek previous advice from other Churches, that they may obtain power to execute their censures, which they have in themselves; no more doth this following advice any way cut them short in the use or execution of their power, but only direct them. And if a Church have not this liberty by rule before censure in difficult cases, as it hath not, no more hath it after a censure, whereby the necessity of advice and counsel may be encreased.

*Objection 2.* This way of proceeding will erect a jurisdiction or judicature in some Churches over others, which is not to be allowed.

So some have spoken, who have not, it may be, duly weighed either what jurisdiction, properly so called, is; or how great an evil it is to cast a reproach upon the right ways of the Lord. In answer I say,

*Answer.* Excommunication it self, whatever men may suppose, is no proper act of jurisdiction. For jurisdiction in any sense is an adjunct of office, and the acts of it are acts of office and power. But so is not excommunication. For it is not an authoritative act of the officers of the Church, but a judicial Sentence of the whole Church. Now the whole Church is not in office. *The whole body is not an eye.* What is then done by it, is no act of office power, but a declaration of a judgment according to especial institution. And if excommunication it self may be exercised without any jurisdiction; surely that exercise may be consulted and advised about, without any pretence thereunto.



2. To constitute a jurisdiction it is required that there be, *first*, an office power stated in them that claim it; and a duty in others on the same account to submit unto them; *secondly*, an authoritative acting by virtue of that office power, with an obligation from that authority, formally considered, unto obedience; with sundry other things, which in this matter are utterly disclaimed.

3. a right understanding of the true state of the question, of what is granted, and what asserted in this matter, will with them that *love peace and truth* fully obviate such objections as these. For,

(1.) It is granted that all Church power and authority, for the administration of all the ordinances and institutions of the Gospel, is intrusted with a particular congregation.

(2.) That there is no judicature, no Church assembly vested with Church power and authority, without, above, or beyond a particular Church, that should either contribute authority unto such a Church for its actings, or authoritatively controul it in its actings, to order or change its proceeding in any thing, as by virtue of any authority received unto that purpose.

(3.) That in case any person be not satisfied with the administration of the Church, whereof he is a member, but finds himself aggrieved thereby, he cannot appeal unto any Church, or Churches, or assemblies of Churches, as having power or authority to revoke, or disannul the sentence or act of the Church, wherewith he is offended; either in pretence that the Church without their concurrence and consent had not power to pass any such act, or that they have authority to controul their acts, or can on any account authoritatively interpose in their administrations.

(4.) It is then granted, that the power of excommunication in the preceding acts unto it, and full execution of it, is placed in a particular congregation, without respect unto any superior authority, but that of Christ and his word. These things are acknowledged; but that it should hence follow, that in case of supposed male administration of ordinances, and the complaint of persons pretending to be injured thereby, other Churches are not by virtue of Scripture rules, institution of our Lord *Jesus*, warrant of the light of nature, on their communion and common interest, to inquire into the matter, and take cognizance of it, that no offence be given or taken, that they may know how to discharge aright their duty towards both the Church and the persons aggrieved, and give their advice in the common concernment of all the Churches, there is no pretence to surmise. And for a Church to say, that because they have power to do what they do, they will therefore in such things neither desire advice, nor take advice, nor hearken unto counsel, nor give account of their proceeding to them that are or may be offended, or that require an account of them, is scarce agreeable to the spirit of Christ, or rule of his word,

*Objection* 3. This is the way to frustrate the sentence of excommunication, and to prevent the due efficacy of it upon persons censured, yea to harden them in their sin and offence.

*Answer* 1. Concerning whom are these things feared? Were the advice mention'd, and the counsel to be had and given to be among heathens, enemies of the Church, or of the ways of Christ, or of the especial way and order of Church fellowship, which in this discourse is supposed, such events might be feared. But to pretend to fear, that other Churches of Christ, walking in the same order and communion with ourselves, and whom we ought to look on in all things as like minded with ourselves, as to their aim at the glory of God, and edification of the Church, should by their counsel and advice frustrate the end of any ordinance of Christ, is a surmise that ought not to be indulged unto. Yea, we have herein cause to admire the wisdom, and bless the care of our Lord *Jesus* Christ, who hath provided this help for us, to strengthen and confirm us in the ways of truth and righteousness, or to direct us where we are, or may be mistaken.

2. Where excommunication is not administered but in a due manner, and for just causes, there will appear little trouble or difficulty in this matter. Let the cause or matter of it be as it ought to be, such a sin or sins, as the mind or conscience of a believer, of an enlightned person free from open prejudices, will at

first



first view condemn in himself and others, and this, or these sins, persisted in after due admonition; and there will indeed be left no pretence of grievance, or complaint in those that are censured. But if it be administered in dubious cases, we shall find that this way of counsel is so far from being an obstruction of its efficacy, as that it is the only means to render it effectual.

3. No man will complain or address himself unto the relief declared, if he be convinced in his conscience that he is not injured, but that he is indeed guilty of the crimes charged on him, and that by Scripture rule they are such as deserve that censure. In this case no man will be so foolish or obstinate as to seek for relief. And if he should do so, he can possibly expect nothing, but to have his bonds made strong. But now suppose that a person be not so convinced, neither before nor after sentence denounced against him, but looks on himself as innocent and injured, either in part, or in whole, in matter or manner of proceeding, what effect can be expected of his excommunication? We are deceived, if we look that this ordinance should have any effect upon men, but by the conviction of their minds and consciences. It worketh doctrinally only, though peculiarly by virtue of especial institution. And in this case it is evident how this way may farther, and that it cannot possibly obstruct the effects of this censure, as was in part before declared.

4. The address being but once to be made, this is the only way to bind the guilty person, and that without delay, and to give him a sense of his sin; which it is supposed that before he had not.

5. It is our duty not to cast even persons that are excommunicated under new temptations. Now he that is aggrieved with the sentence denounced against him, and supposeth himself injured (which whilst he doth so, he cannot be humbled for his sin) if he supposeth he hath no way of relief left unto him, that is, that his case can no more come under advice or counsel; he will be exposed unto temptations to irregular ways, and so cast off the yoke, which he supposeth grievous and injurious.

*Objection 4.* The pattern urged for this course of proceeding, *Acts xv.* concerneth only doctrines, and not the administration of censures, which was not then, nor there in question. And therefore in the like case only may the like course be taken.

*Answer 1.* The way of mutual counsel and advice amongst Churches, pleaded for, is not built only upon that instance and example, as hath before been evinced. There are many more grounds of it, reasons for it, and directions about it, than what are, or can be comprised in any one particular instance.

2. There is frequently, if not always, some doctrinal mistake in the bottom of all maleadministration. For whereas the nature of the sin proceeded against, and the rule proceeded by, ought in the first place to be doctrinally and dogmatically stated, here usually is the beginning of the mistake and error of any Church. This therefore falls confessedly under that example of *Acts xv.*

3. Though that assembly made a doctrinal determination of the things in difference, yet the formal reason of the consideration of those things was the offence that was given, and that the Churches were troubled. So that the pattern is to be extended unto all things whereby the peace of the Church is disturbed.

4. Maleadministration may tend to the subversion of the Church, and the ruin of the souls of men, no less than false doctrines. As suppose a Church should admit known *Arians*, or *Socinians* into their society, supposing they have liberty so to do, may not other Churches both consider the fact, and unless they alter their proceeding, withhold communion from them? Instances innumerable of the same kind may be given.

*Objection 5.* Churches have the sole power of admitting members into their society; by virtue of which admission they are not only received into a participation of the privileges of the Church in that particular society, whereof they are members; but also into the communion of all other Churches of Christ. Now this is daily practised by Churches, without any farther inspection into their actions by others. Those admitted are received upon their testimony into their admission. And why shall not Churches have the same trust reposed in them, as to the exclusion of any members from them; and expect that their testimony alone in the fact should satisfy, for their exclusion from all other Churches, and their communion?



*Answer 1.* The cases indeed are parallel, and the power of every Church is no less for the exclusion of any of their members, than for their admission. Nor ought their testimony to be of less weight in the one, than in the other.

2. Ordinarily, and where there is no ground of farther consideration, the actions of a Church of Christ in both these cases are, and ought to be granted, and taken to be according unto rule; so that other Churches do acquiesce as to their concerns in the judgment of all the several Churches of their communion.

3. There may be mistakes in admission, as well as in the exclusion of members. And some there are, who do very much scruple compleat communion with many Churches, principally upon this account, that they proceed not on right grounds in their admission of members; and such cannot but grant, that on occasion the grounds of their own admissions may, and ought to be questioned and examined.

4. No Church hath such an absolute power in the admission of members, but that in cases of difficulty, and such as may in their determination one way or other give offence, they are bound to seek, and to take the advice of other Churches with whom they hold communion.

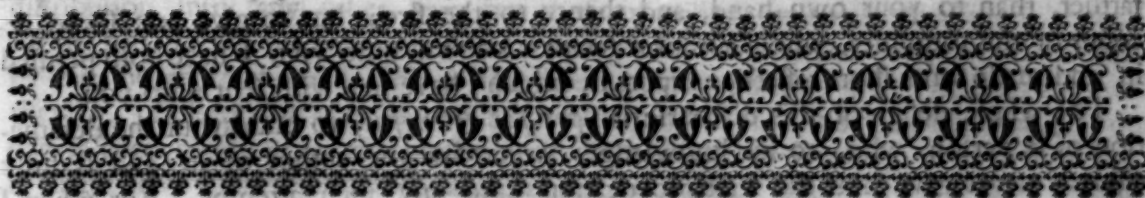
5. Suppose it be reported or intimated by any of the ways that were before mentioned, that a Church in communion with others, had admitted into their society an *Arian*, or *Socinian*, a seducer, or a person of a flagitious life, given to corrupt the manners of others; shall not the other Churches of the same communion, to whom the matter is so reported, or declared, and who are offended thereat, require an account of the Church's proceeding therein, to know whether it be as it is reported, or no? And is not that Church, so represented or reported of, obliged to give a full and punctual account of their proceedings, and to receive advice thereupon? Let any consider the instances before given, the nature of the thing itself, the rule of the Scripture in such cases, and determine. The case is directly the same as to excommunication. *But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God,* 1 Cor. xi. 16.



## REFLECTIONS

## REFLECTIONS





# REFLECTIONS

## ON A SLANDEROUS LIBEL

### AGAINST DOCTOR OWEN,

In a LETTER to Sir THOMAS OVERBURY.

SIR,



T is upon your desire, and not in any compliance with my own judgment, or inclination, that I have taken a little consideration of a late slanderous libel published against me. I have learned, I bless God, to bear and pass by such reproaches, without much trouble to myself, or giving the least unto others. My mind and conscience are not at all concerned in them, and so far as my reputation seems to be so, I am very willing to let it go: for I cannot entertain a valuation of their good opinion, whose minds are capable of an impression from such virulent calumnies: besides, I know that there is nothing absolutely new in these things under the sun. Others also have met with the like entertainment in the world in all ages, whose names I shall not mention, to avoid the envy in comparing myself with them. I acknowledge that it is a dictate of the law of nature, that where others do us open wrong, we should do ourselves right, so far as we lawfully may. But I know also, that it is in the power of every one to forego the prosecution of his own right, and the vindication of himself, if thereby there arise no detriment unto others. That which alone in this case may be feared, is, lest offence should be taken against my person to the disadvantage of other endeavours, wherein I desire to be useful in the world.

But



But against this also I have the highest security from that indignation and contempt wherewith this libel is entertained by all persons of ingenuity and sobriety. Not out of any respect therefore to myself, or my own name (things of little or no consideration in or to the world) nor out of a desire that this paper should ever pass farther, than to your own hand, and thence to the fire; but to give you some account of this pamphlet, whose author it seems is known unto you, I have both perused it, and made some short reflections upon it, which I have herewith sent unto you.

The whole design of this discourse is, *per fas & nefas*, to endeavour the defamation of a person, who, to his knowledge, never saw the author of it, and is fully assured, never gave him the least provocation unto any such attempt. For when I am told who he is, I am as wise and knowing unto all his concerns as I was before. And yet it is not only my reputation, but considering my present state and condition, with the nature of his libellous aspersions, my farther outward trouble in the world, that he aimeth at; from which he seemeth to be much displeased that I am secured by the righteousness of the government, and laws under which I live. Now however he pleased himself in this attempt, yet there is no man but may give as tolerable an account by the law of God, the customs of civilized nations, and in the estimation of wise and honest men, of robbing persons on the highway, and spoiling them of their goods, as he can do of this undertaking. It is true, some others have of late dealt not much otherwise with me, wherein how far they have satisfied themselves and others, time will discover. But yet according to the present custom and manner of men, they may give some tolerable pretence to what they have done. For they sufficiently declare that they were provoked by me, though no such thing were intended; and it is abundantly manifest, that they had no other way left them to give countenance unto some fond imaginations which they have unadvisedly published, but by petulant reviling of him, by whom they thought they were detected. And such things have not been unfrequent in the world. But as for this author, one wholly unknown to me, without the compass of any pretence of the least provocation from me, to accommodate the lusts and revenges of others, with that unruly evil, a mercenary tongue, full of deadly poison, without the management of any difference, real or pretended, merely to calumniate and load me with false aspersions, as in the issue they will prove, is an instance of such a depraved disposition of mind, such a worthless baseness of soul, such a neglect of all rules of morality, and principles of human conversation, such a contempt of Scripture precepts innumerable, as it may be can scarcely be parallel'd in an age, amongst the vilest of men. Something I confess of this nature is directed unto in the casuistical divinity, or modern policy of the Jesuits: for they have declared it lawful to reproach and calumniate any one who hath done them an injury, or otherwise reflected on the honour of their society. And notable instances of their management of this principle are given us by the ingenious discoverer of their mysteries. But they always require a previous injury, or provocation to justify themselves in this filthy kind of revenge. And hereby is our author freed from the suspicion of having been influenced by their suggestions. For he hath gone in a way whereon they never attempted to set a foot before him; and scorning a villany that hath a precedent, he seems to design himself an example in the art of sycophantry. However the same author hath directed men unto the best way of returning an answer unto false and calumnious accusations, whatever be their occasion. For he tells us, that *Valerianus Magnus* an honest *Capuchin* Fryar, being so dealt withal by a Jesuit, made not any defence of his own innocency, any farther than by adjoining unto all the instances of his charge, *Mentiris impudentissime*. And this you will immediately find to be the substance of that answer which this book deserves. For setting aside things relating to the former publick troubles and disorders in these nations, from the venom of all reflections from whence I am secured by the government, law, and interest of the kingdom, all which in this revival of them are notoriously abused and trampled on, and there is no one thing charged on me in the whole libel, but that either in the matter, or manner of its relation, is notoriously false. The task I acknowledge of making this discovery would be grievous and irksome unto me, but that I must not account any thing so, which may fall out amongst men in the world; and do remember him, who after he had done some publick services, whereof others had the advantage, was forced to defend his own house against thieves and robbers.



The whole discourse is a railing accusation, such as the Angel durst not bring against the Devil; but such as hath many characters and lineaments upon it, of him who was a false accuser and murderer from the beginning. Neither is it capable of a distribution into any other, parts but those of railing, and false accusations. And for the first, seeing he hath manifested his propensity unto it, and delight in it, he shall by me, be left to the possession of that honour and reputation which he hath acquired thereby. Besides his way of managery hath rendred it of no consideration. For, had it been condit to the present gust of the age, by language, wit, or drollery, it might have found some entertainment in the world. But downright dirty railing is beneath the genius of the times, and by common consent condemned to bear garden, and *Billingsgate*. His charges and accusations, wherein doubtless he placed his principal hopes of success (though I much question whether he knew what he aimed at in particular or no) may in so many instances be called over, as to discover unto you with what little regard to Christianity, truth, or honesty, they have been forged and managed by him.

I shall begin with what he calls my *practices*, and then proceed to the *principles* he mentions, which is the best order his confused rhapsody of slanders can be reduced unto, though inverting that which he projected in his title.

1. One of the first charges I meet withal upon the first head, is *pag. 9.* That *I was one of them who promised Cromwell his life upon his last sickness, and assured him that his days should be prolonged.* This I confess he manageth somewhat faintly and dubiously, the reason whereof I cannot guess at, it being as true as those other tales, in the report whereof he pretends to more confidence. And I have no answer to return but that of the fryer before mentioned, *Mentitur impudentissime*; for I saw him not in his sickness, nor in some long time before. Of the same nature is what he affirms, *pag. 28.* Of my being the instrument in the ruin of his son Richard, with whose setting up, and pulling down, I had no more to do, than himself. And such are the reasons which he gives, for that which never was. For the things he instanceth in, were my own choice, against all importunities to the contrary; so that the same answer must be returned again, *Mentitur impudentissime.* *Pag. 10.* he charges me, that in *writing against the Papists, I reflected upon the authority of the King, as to his power in matters of religion:* which he repeats again, *pag. 34.* and calls it a *covert undermining of the just authority of the King.* Still the same answer is all that can be given. His Majesty's supremacy, as declared and established by law, is asserted and proved in the book he intends, *pag. 404, 405, 406.* Nor is there any word in the places quoted by him in his margin, that will give the least countenance to this false calumny. Besides the book was approved by authority, and that by persons of another manner of judgment and learning, than this pitiful scribler, who are all here defamed by him. *Pag. 12.* he chargeth me with *countenancing an accusation against the reverend bishop of Chester, then warden of Wadham college;* which is a known lye, and such I believe the bishop, if he be asked, will attest it to be. And so *pag. 14,* he says, *I received a commission from Oliver to carry gladium ferri:* but *mentitur impudentissime*; for I never received commission from any man, or company of men in this world, nor to my remembrance did I ever wear a sword in my life. His whole *34 page,* had there been any thing of wit, or ingenuity in fiction in it, I should have suspected to have been borrowed from *Lucian's Vera Historia,* concerning which he affirmed, that he wrote that which he had never seen, nor heard, nor did any one declare unto him. For it is only a confused heap of malicious lies, which all that read and know, laugh at with scorn. Such likewise is the ridiculous story he tells, *pag. 66.* *Of my ordering things so, that members of Parliament should have a book, which he calls mine, laid in their lodgings by unknown hands;* whereof there is not any thing in substance or circumstance that can lay the least pretence to truth, but it is an entire part of his industrious attempt to carry the whetstone. The same must be said concerning what he reports of passages between me, and the then Lord Chancellor; which as I have good witnesses to prove the mistake that fell out between us, not to have been occasioned by me, so I much question, whether this author was informed of the untruths he reports, by doctor *Barlow,* or whether ever he gave him his consent to use his name publicly for a countenance unto such a defamatory libel. It were endless and useless to call out



the remaining instances of the same kind, whereof I think there is scarce a page free in his book, unless it be taken up with quotations. And I am sure that whoever will give the least credit unto any of his stories and assertions, will do it at the utmost peril of being deceived. And where any thing he aims at, hath the least of truth in it, he doth but make it a foundation to build a falshood upon. Such are his ingenious repetitions of some things I should say, fourteen or fifteen years ago, in private discourses; which yet supposing them true in the terms by him reported, as they are not, contain nothing of immorality, nothing of injury unto, or reflection on others. Surely this man must be thought to study the adorning and freedom of conversation, who thus openly traducerh a person for words occasionally, and it may be hastily spoken, without the least injury to any, or evil in themselves, fourteen or fifteen years after. And these also are such as he hath taken upon mere reports, for I believe he will not say, that ever he spake one word with me himself in his life. How any one can safely converse with a man of this spirit and humour, I know not.

I shall wholly pass by his malicious wresting and false applications of the passages he hath quored out of some things published by me: for as for the greatest part of those small perishing *treatises*, whence he and others have extracted their pretended advantages, it is many years since I saw them, some of them twenty at the least; nor do I know, how they have dealt in repeating their *excerpta*, which with so much diligence they have collected, that they are several times wrested and perverted by this malicious scribler unto things never intended by me, that I do know. One discourse, about *communion with God*, I find there is much wrath stirred up against; and yet upon the severe scrutiny which it hath on several hands undergone, nothing can be found to lay to its charge, but one passage concerning some differences about external worship; which they needed not to have put themselves to so much trouble to have found out, and declared. But as for this man, he makes such inferences from it, and applications of it, as are full of malice and poison, being not inferior in those good qualifications unto any of his other prodigious tales. For from what I speak concerning the purity of instituted worship, he concludes, that I judge, that all who in the worship of God make use of the *Common prayer*, are not loyal to Christ, nor have communion with God, nor can promote the interest of the Gospel; all which are notoriously false, never thought, never spoken, never written by me. And I do believe, that many that have used that book in the publick administrations, have been as loyal to Christ, had as much communion with God, and been as zealous to promote the interest of the Gospel, as any who have lived in the world this thousand years. For men are accepted with God according to what they have, and not according to what they have not.

The next charge I can meet withal in this confused heap, which is like the grave, a place of darkness without any order, is no less than of perjury. And this principally he doth on such an account, as is not at all peculiar to me; but the reproach he manageth is equally cast on the greatest part of the kingdom by this publick defamer. And I suppose others do, though I do not know the prudence of encouraging such a slanderous libeller, to cast fire brands among peaceable subjects; and to revive the remembrance of things, which the wisdom, clemency and righteousness of his Majesty, with, and by the law of the land, upon the best and most assured principles of piety and policy, hath put into oblivion. And it also seems strange to me, how bold he and some other scriblers make, by their interesting the sacred name of his Majesty, and his concerns in their impertinent squablings, as they do on all occasions. But such things are of another cognizance, and there I leave them. What is peculiar to my self in this charge, is represented under a double instance:

1. Of the oath of canonical obedience, which I took and violated. And,
2. Of the university oath.

For the *first*, although I could easily return an answer unto the thing it self, yet as to what concerns me, I shall give no other, but, *mentitur impudentissime*, I never took any such oath.

And for the *other* I doubt not to speak with some confidence, that the intention and design of the oath, was observed by me, with as much conscience and diligence,



diligence, as by any who have since acted in the same capacity, wherein I was at that time reflected on. And upon the provocation of this man, whoever he be, I do not fear to say, that considering the state and condition of affairs, at that time in the nation and the university, I do not believe there is any person of learning, ingenuity, or common modesty, who had relation in those days unto that place, but will grant at least, that notwithstanding some lesser differences from them, about things of very small importance, I was not altogether useless to the interest of learning, morality, peace, and the preservation of the place it self; and farther I am not concerned in the ingratitude and envy of a few illiterate and malicious persons, as knowing, that *Obtrectatio est stultorum thesaurus, quem in linguis gerunt.*

But if all these attempts prove successless, there is that yet behind, which shall justify the whole charge, or at least the author in filling up his bill, with so many prodigious falsities. And this is, my *blaspheming the Lord's prayer*, which is exaggerated with many tragical expressions, and hideous exclamations: as indeed who can lay too heavy a load on so horrid a crime? But how if this should not prove so? How if by all his outcries he should but adorn and set forth his own forgeries? This I know, that I do, and ever did believe, that that prayer is part of the canonical Scripture, which I would not willingly blaspheme. I do believe that it was composed by the Lord *Jesus Christ* himself, and have vindicated it from being thought a collection and composition of such petitions as were then in use among the *Jews*, as some learned men had, I think unadvisedly, asserted it to be. I do and ever did believe it the most perfect form for prayer that ever was composed; and the words of it so disposed by the divine wisdom of our blessed Saviour, that it comprehends the substance of all the matter of prayer to God. I do and did always believe, that it ought to be continually meditated on, that we may learn from thence, both what we ought to pray for, and in what manner; neither did I ever think a thought, or speak a word unsuitable to these assertions. Wherein then doth this great blasphemy lie? Unto two heads it must be reduced.

1. That I judge not, that our Lord *Jesus Christ* in the giving of this prayer unto his disciples, did prescribe unto them the precise use or repetition of those words, but only taught them what to pray for, or how.

Now although it may be this man doth not, yet all men of any tolerable learning or reading know, that this assertion relating only to the different interpretations of one expression, indeed of one word, in one of the Evangelists, hath been owned and allowed by learned men of all parties and persuasions. He may if he please consult *Grotius*, *Musculus*, and *Cornelius a Lapide*, to name one of a side for his information. But,

2. I have delivered other things concerning the use of it, in my *book* against the *Socinians*.

Whereunto I shall only say, that he who differs from others in the manner of the use of any thing, may have as reverend an esteem of the thing it self as they; and herein I shall not give place unto any man that lives on the earth, with respect unto the Lord's prayer. It is true, I have said, that there were manifold abuses in the rehearsal of it amongst people ignorant and superstitious; and did deliver my thoughts, it may be too freely and severely, against some kind of repetition of it. But as for the ridiculous and impudent charge of blasphemy hence raised by this pitiful calumniator, I am no way concerned in it. No more am I with that lye, which hath been now reported to the satiety of its first broachers and promoters: namely, that I should *put on my hat, upon the repetition of it*; it was as I remember about fifteen years ago, that such a rumour was raised, by I know not whom, nor on what occasion. It was somewhat long before I heard any whisper of it, as is the manner in such cases. But so soon as I did attain a knowledge that such a slander had been reported and scattered abroad, I did cause to be published, in *English* and *French*, a declaration of its notorious falsity, in the year 1655. But so prone are many to give entertainment to false reproaches of them, whom on any account they are displeased with; so unwilling to part with a supposed advantage against them, though they know it to have been put into their hand by the mistakes, folly, or malice of others; that the same untruth hath been several times since, repeated and republished, without the least taking notice that it was publicly



publickly denied, condemned, and the authors of it challenged to give any tolerable account of their report. Only of late, one learned person, meeting it afresh, where its admittance would have been to his advantage (namely Mr. *Durel*, in his *answer* unto the apology of some *Nonconformists*) had the ingenuity to acknowledge the publick disclaimure of any such practice so long since made and published, and thereon at least to suspend his assent to the report itself.

I am, Sir, quite weary of repeating the instances of this man's notorious falshood and unjust accusations; I shall therefore overlook the remainder of them on this head, that I may give you one of his intolerable weakness and ignorance. And this lies in his attempt to find out contradictions between what I have written in several places about *toleration*, and *liberty of conscience*, pag. 67. For because I say, that *pernicious errors are to be opposed and extirpated by means appointed, proper, and suitable thereunto*; as also, that it is the *duty of the magistrate to defend, protect, countenance, and promote the truth*; the man thinks that these things are inconsistent with liberty of conscience, and such a toleration, or forbearance, as at any time I have pleaded for. But if any man should persuade him to let those things alone, which either he hath nothing to do withal, or doth not understand, it may be he would accommodate him with a sufficient leisure, and more time than he knows well how to dispose of.

II. His last attempt is upon some sayings, which he calls my *principles*, in the representation whereof, whether he hath dealt with any greater regard to truth and honesty, than are the things we have already passed through, shall be briefly considered.

The first, as laid down in the *contents* prefixed to this sorry chapter, is in these words: *That success in business doth authorize its cause; and that if God's providence permits a mischief, his will approves it.*

There are two parts, you see, of this principle; whereof the *first* is, that success will justify a cause in business; that is, as I take it, any one: and *secondly*, that which God permits, he doth approve. Now as both parts of this principle are diabolically false, so in their charge on me also; so that I must betake my self again to the example of the fryer, and say, *Mentitur impudentissime*. A cause is good or bad, before it hath success one way or other. And that which hath not its warrant in itself, can never obtain any from its success. The rule of the goodness of any publick cause, is the eternal law of reason, with the just legal rights and interests of men. If these make not a cause good, success will never mend it. But when a cause on these grounds is so indeed, or is really judged such by them that are engaged in it, not to take notice of the providence of God in prospering men in the pursuit of it, is to exclude all thoughts of him and his providence from having any concern in the government of the world. And if I, or any other, have at any time applied this unto any cause, not warranted by the only rule of its justification, it no way reflects on the truth of the principle which I assert; nor gives countenance to the false one, which he ascribes unto me. For the latter clause of this pretended principle, that if God's providence permit a mischief, his will approves it, I suspect there is some other ingredient in it, besides lying and malice, namely stupid ignorance. For it is mischief in a moral sense that he intends, nothing being the object of God's approbation or disapprobation, on any other account. It would therefore seem very strange, how any one who hath but so much understanding, as to know that this principle would take away all differences between good and evil, should provide himself of so much impudence, as to charge it on me.

Another principle, in pursuit of the same design, he lays down as mine, pag. 46, namely, *That saints may retain their holiness in the act of sinning, and that whatever law they violate, God will not impute it to them as a sin.*

There seems to be two parts of this principle also. The *first* is, that saints may retain their holiness in the act of sinning. I know not well what he means by this part of his principle, and yet do, for some reasons, suppose him to be more remote from the understanding of it, than I am, although the words are his own. If he mean, that the act of sinning is not against, or an impeachment of holiness, it is a ridiculous contradiction. If he mean, that every actual sin doth not deprive the sinner of all holiness; he is ridiculous himself, if he assert that it doth, seeing  
there



*there is no man that doth good, and sinneth not.* The framing of the last clause of this principle smells of the same cask; and as it is charged on me, is false. Whatever law of God any man breaks, it is a sin, is so judged of God, and by him imputed so far unto the sinner, as to judge him guilty thereof, whoever he be. But God doth not impute every sin unto believers unto judgment and condemnation. And if he can understand any thing in the books quoted by him, he will find that there is no more in them towards what he reflects upon, but that God will by his grace preserve true believers from falling into such sins, as whereby they should totally and finally lose their faith, fall from grace, and be cast out of God's covenant. This principle I own, and despise his impotent, ignorant, and ridiculous defamation of it.

His *third* principle is about *praying by the Spirit*, which he chargeth at the highest rate, as that which will destroy all government in the world.

I know well enough, whence he hath learned this kind of arguing. But I have no reason to concern my self particularly in this matter. The charge, for ought I know, as here proposed, falls equally on all Christians in the world; for whether men pray by a book, or without a book, if they pray not by the Spirit, that is, the assistance of the spirit of God, they pray not at all. Let therefore the Scripture and Christianity answer for themselves, at present in this charge I am not particularly concerned.

Thus, Sir, I have complied with your desire, unto a perusal of this confused heap of malicious calumnies, which otherwise I had absolutely in silence put off to the judgment of the great day. It may be this author hath scarce yet cast up his accompt, nor considered what it is to lend his fingers to others to thrust into the fire, which they would not touch themselves. For whilst they do, or may, if they please, enjoy their satisfaction in his villany and folly, the guilt and shame of them will return in a cruciating sense upon his own understanding and conscience. When this shall befall him, as it will do assuredly, if he be not utterly profligate, he will find no great relief in wishing that he had been better advised; nor in considering, that those, who rejoice in the calumny, do yet despise the sycophant. I am,

Sir,

Your &c.

J. O.











# ORATIONES V.

Clarissimi & doctissimi viri,

*Joannis Owen, S. T. P.*

In celeberrima OXONIENSIS Academia habitæ, dum  
PROCANCELLARII munus per quinquennium illic  
administravit.

His alia oratio accedit, ejusdem academix nomine ad RICHARDUM CROMWELLUM  
habita, cum CANCELLARII officium, anno 1658, suscepit.

## \* ORATIO I.



O tandem devenisse fata academix, ut post tot veneranda nomina,  
verenda capita, artium ac scientiarum promos condos, & dictato-  
res, is eorum duceret, qui pæne agmen claudit, vos vere dolere plus-  
quam persentisco, academici. Neque sane mihi admodum arridet  
rerum hæc nostrarum qualiscunque dispositio, qua ad desideratissi-  
mam matrem, longo post intervallo, reditis quasi præludia operosæ  
difficilisque provincix administratione agere cogor. At nullius  
infortunii remedia sunt querela. Viros graves & honestos in quo-  
cunque casu positos dedecent gemitus. Erecti animi est prementi oneri fortius obniti.

\* Hæc oratio habita est anno 1652, cum procancellarii munus primum est ingressus.



Ita enim, ut cum comico loquar, *est vita hominum, quasi cum ludas tesseris; si illud, quod maxime opus est jactu, non cadit; illud, quod cecidit forte, id arte ut corrigas*<sup>2</sup>. Cunctis pæne, quorum provectior ætas, diuturniore rerum usu subactius ingenium, multo pulvere scholastico exsudati doctorum tituli, magnam, nec incassum, sui expectationem dederunt, navim academicam, heu! longum nimis procellis agitatam deferentibus; ex illius, cujus imperio refragari nobis haud fas est, propensa in me voluntate & iniqua æstimatione, cui nequicquam renisæ sunt intensissimæ obtestationes, hujusce vero senatus annuente suffragio, evocatus, quo vix est ineptior alter, ad gubernaculum accedo. In quæ tempora, quos hominum mores, qualia judiciorum divortia, grassantibus ubique ob studia partium dissidiis atque calumniis, quos animorum motus acerbiores & ἀσπικράτιστα, affectus denique quo fastu, qua ærugine obsessos, inciderunt fasces nostri academici, & scio, & doleo. Nec solum nos seculi genio distrahimur, sed & indies alia conspectior incedit fundi literarii calamitas. Spreta nimirum sacrosancta legum auctoritate, superiorum reverentia, vigili malevolorum invidia, contemptis pæne moribundæ matris academiciæ lachrymis ac singultibus, cum æterno gentis togatæ nominis dispendio, nec sine summo totius *πρωπάλῃ* discrimine, detestanda audacia, & licentia plane Epicurea, extra omnes modestiæ ac pietatis cancellos, heu! nimia studioforum portio vagatur. Egone ideo idoneus, qui huic nodo, cui frustra pacatissimis temporibus insudarunt tot tantique heroes, nutanti rerum omnium conditione cuneum admoverem? Οὐχ ἔτι τὸς τετύφωμαι, academici. Si hominis ira inepte sibi adblandientis partes mihi sumerem, imo si vel levicula hujusmodi animum subiret cogitatio, totus ipse mihi displicerem. Non ita remotus domo, aut procul a meipso dego, non ita lamiarum instar disposui ocellos, quin quam sit doctrinæ, prudentiæ, gravitatis, sapientiæ mihi curta supellex, probe noverim. Luculum vel gregarii militis officii rudem, peritum nullo nogotio evadentem imperatorem, ita ut quem πολέμων ἄπειρον dimisit urbs, totius rei militaris ἑμπεiron acceperit exercitus, tanquam naturæ ostentum celebravit antiquitas. Bono animo este, academici, prodigia nulla fero; qui ex latebris ruralis secessus, armorum strepitu, evangelii causa in ultimas hujus insulæ, nec non transmarinas oras, excursionibus, aulae tumultu, rei academiciæ administrandæ imperitus, recessi, imperitus etiam huc accedo.

Quid ergo, malum, inquires, hoc est dementiæ? Cur provinciam hanc, cui administrandæ, nedum ornandæ, non sis idoneus, suscepisti? Pessime in te, in academiam, in senatum hunc venerandum consulisti. Bona verba, auditores, summorum virorum judicio, votis, imperio, precibus, obnoxio non penitus deficit aut spes, aut animus. Ἀνδραγαθημάτων qualiumcunque haud ipsi sumus scaturigines. Ὁ ἐπιχρηστών *πρωμα τῷ πειρώσει*, & qui ex ore infantium fundit fortitudinem, defectus omnes, quos vel foras retuli, vel intus sensi, gratiose supplere & vires administrare potis est. Mihi ideo propriis viribus, ac παρήσια, & succedaneo adminiculo, favore academico, quod sciam, aut meruerim, destituto, hoc tamen restat, illi ut me totus dedam, qui dat omnibus benigne, nec exprobrat. Perennem ille auxiliorum fontem constituit Christum, qui nulli non pio conamini εὐκαρὸν suppeditat βοήθειαν, nostra nisi obstat ὀλιγοπισία: inde lumen, inde vires, inde spiritus mihi expectandi, imo orandi sunt. Illius ideo præsentis gratiose promissæ innixus, pro statu temporum, & occasione rerum, quam, divina ita providentia disponente, nacti sumus, unica conscientis integritate, aliorum adjumentorum & ornamentorum omnium vices obeunte, nec propendente, nec dependente genio, negotio huic me accingo.

Si modo bonorum obsequi studiis, inservire commodis, opem ferre egenis, & quibus est res angusta domi, si in extricandis immerito perplexis, impeditis, aut turbatis, operam insumere mihi liceat; si vel in confinio & proxima parte virtutis versantibus mansueti ulla animi officia præstare possim; pacis, famæ, studiorum, quorum dispendio, nihil usus circuitione, sciens videntque compendiose lito, haud ita poenitenda forsitan erit jactura. At si Bibuli consulatus segnis ac vilis, si Sisyphi labor, volvendo semper eodem revolventem negotiorum acervum frustraneus ac inutilis, mihi contingerent; si in dirimendis de lana caprina litibus, si in terrorem miseris mortalibus & vitiorum ægris incutiendo, vel poenam infligendo, vel in ejusmodi solum ingratissimis peragendis sudandum sit; ne infelici adjudicarer Caucaso, damnatorias tabellas quavis prece, vel quocunque pretio redemptas velim.

Non quod in reprimendis vitiis, repurgandis sordibus, ne sentibus, spinis, tribulisque obsita horreret academia, conatus satis laudabiles exeri non possunt. Imo vos omnes, qui conscientis propriæ, qui famæ publicæ, qui perenni florentissimæ acade-

<sup>2</sup> Terent. Adelp. iv. 7. 21.



miæ salutis, qui reipublicæ hujusce, *νομιμα* licet, sed *θεοιούμης*, utilitati, vel mica bonæ animæ litatis; vos, inquam, omnes, vestramque opem, consilium, vires, diligentiam, ne flaccescat gubernatorum reverentia, nutet superiorum dignitas, evanescat antiqua studiosorum gravitas, industria, compositi mores, ne demum omnium bonorum, malis omnibus despecta, jaceat auctoritas, appello. Me vero quod attinet, munusque hoc recens inpositum, si qui sint ignavi, ebriosi, ludiones, nugatores, circulatores, superiorum contemptores, legirupæ, noctivagi, noti juventutis corruptores, bonorum ofores, cultus divini neglectores, vel alia ejusmodi academiciæ carcinomata & ulcera, neque me illorum mores, neque illos meam hanc qualemunque *παρακατα* ferre posse spes est. In hac vero parte provinciæ nostræ ornanda, si quid durius, si quid, quod tamen fieri non oportet, inclementius, in quemcunque constitutum fuerit, id omne temporum necessitati, & conservandæ misere fluctuanti reipublicæ literariæ acceptum ferendum esse æqui rerum arbitri facile agnoscant. Nec erit forsân, cur ob nostram tenuitatem despectui sit facinorosorum & delicatulorum turbæ academiciæ auctoritas. Etenim ut bonis omnibus omnimodo prodesse statutum est, sic malis haud cedere itidem indubium. At parcius ista. Quæ agenda sunt quidem, sed non sine ullius boni, aut mitis ingenii, quadam ægritudine peragi queunt, quoad fieri potest, deprecanda & evitanda esse consentient omnes, quibus salit aliquid *leve sub parte mamillæ*.

Majora itaque, & præclaris aliorum hoc ipso seculo omne genus inceptis, quibus paria præterlapsæ ætates facinora non ediderunt, aliqua ex parte respondentia, in orbe nostro tentanda esse arbitramur. An solis academicis, Anglorum nomine celebri fama per totum orbem diffuso, libet esse ingloriis? Consulta patrum, tropæa militum, incrementa gloriæ rei civilis ac militaris, quæ dederunt, quibus est commissæ, senatores, ac duces, horret Europa. Absit, academici, ut peculiare nostrum depositum, religionis ac literarum honos, quasi omnino seculo impares essemus, solum vilescat. Dum in omni laudabili conatu alii haud contemnendos faciunt progressus, vix, aut ne vix quidem, nos ad antiqua revertimur? Imo, quid nisi nostra segnitie, & aliud agendo consumptæ vires, ut superiorum temporum, uti aiunt, felicitas a nonnullis tantopere desideraretur, in causa est? Eminuere, fateor, tum temporis nonnulli linguarum peritia, eloquentiæ laude, scientiarum lumine, veterum scriniorum monumenta scrutandi diligentia, & ruspandis antiquitatis rudibus clari; quibus omnibus & singulis, quo minus debitus honor & gloria, cultus & reverentia nominis consent, & sint perennes, non sum adeo vecordis animæ, nec tam extra anni solisque vias positus, ut ullo modo interpellem. At, pro pudor! quale studiosorum vulgus? Quanta orbis literati pars tenebris offusa? Ponite senile supercilium, pingue otium, aliarum ambitionum inanes titulos, micantibus undique literarum præmiis; per multos enim annos, qui serio rem agebant, apparere *ταυρας in gurgite vasto*. Eo vero jam redierunt res academiciæ, ut nisi pietatem, fidem, mores compositos, modestiam, cum summa in omni studiorum genere diligentia adhibeamus, quin cum perenni dedecore, dedignitate, statu & conditione hac honesta nobis periclitandum sit, non est ambigendum. Hæc ergo Rhodus, hic saltus noster. Quicquid consilio, prudentia, illibato virtutis exemplo, quicquid denique summorum virorum auctoritate, tantillo scilicet temporis spatio, eoque tantis rerum ac animorum motibus agitato, quod ex bonarum artium & literarum, explosis belli terribulamentis, *παλιγγενεσία* excucurrit, præstari potuerit, id omne antecessorum nostrorum laudum cumulo lubens addico. At quibus omnia ex voto successerunt, quorum sanctioribus inceptis undequaque responderunt eventus, numero vix sunt totidem, quot Thebarum portæ. In magnis voluisse sat est; nec nostram industriam, si qua est, præcluserunt molimina aliorum præclare gesta; multo minus succedentium famæ, si qui sint, obesse poterunt in administranda hac provincia imbecilli nostri conatus.



## \* ORATIO II.



**B**ONUM FACTUM, procuratores. Neque enim animam agit academia, ut opus habeat testamentum nuncupare, aut ut legatorum dispositione divitias suas in alumnos dispertire teneatur. Hucusque ergo, academici, quamvis, pro dolor! evasimus, dicendum est tamen, evasimus. Viximus, dum ipsum hoc vixisse nonnihil, imo magnum fuit; ævo scilicet seculi graves, & ipsius mundi mortalitate tantum non oppressi. Ostendent alii tropæa, hostium spolia, flosculorum fertis redimita capita, summæ pacis, & placidissimi recessus fructus uberiores; nos cicatrices, pulverem, & sudorem, erectas ad cælum manus, non penitus indigna Deo hominibusque colluctantia insignia circumferimus. Non enim umbratilem causam egimus, non de finibus regundis, de quibus tot annos bella incruenta, & pæne ludicra, intulerunt imbelles finitimi; sed de tota possessione, sacro antiquæ pietatis deposito, præsentis spe ac semine, dictum nefas! nobis contentio fuit. Prostratos cenopolas, mimas, balatrones, devictos cerevisarios, noctivagos, scurras, aliasque hominum quisquillas supplices in scenam productas, dispersa gentis togatæ pomœria, instaurata epomidum & epitogiorum ephippia, honestis nominibus celebrata, nolite expectare. Hæc illorum gloria, hoc decus, quibus mollissimis temporibus, & longo otio deductis, tot tantaque moliri placuit. Hoc unice nobis in votis fuit, cum officii ratio postularet, ut publice aliquid vobis edisseremus, nec tantum superesset dicendum, *fuius* academici.

Tantum vero cum hoc sit, tamque insigne privilegium, nondum periisse, non nisi Dei immortalis beneficio illud par est deberi. Ei ideo *in ægypto* optimo, sospitatori unico, salutis fonti, qui disiectis undique ac demersis, cæli ruina & violentia, majoribus, imo prætoris navibus, portuosam cymbalæ nostræ exhibuit providentiam, quicquid apud nos pium aut utile restat, quicquid meliori nota & virtutis nomine inter mortales dignum censetur, in ipso limine dicemus. Qui nihil divinum, nihil ope mortali grandius, in declinantis rei literariæ subsidium & fulcimentum venire sentit, illam rerum divinarum pariter ac humanarum socordia, & negligentia supina laborare, cum res ipsa oculis & prope manibus teneatur, non est ambigendum. Rubum ardentem, nec consumptum, stupuit olim magnus nomotheta. Præclarum & antiquum qui spectaret ædificium, disiectis undique pedamentis & adminiculis, in ipso pæne ære pendulum, mole sua sibi ipsi ruinam, aliis perniciem minitabundum, contra vim tamen procellarum, ventorum, & turbinum victrices & triumphales attollens summitates; velut immota rupes, cui toties horridico fragore nequicquam sese illiserint nimbus & hyems; occultam illam vim & admirabilem, quæ tantæ moli sustinenda, tot oppugnationibus propellendis par esset, venerabundus suspiceret. Gratosam igitur Dei O. M. providentiam recolite, academici, & perenni literariæ diuturnitati quotquot bene vultis, auditores, quæ gymnasia, adeoque ipsam academiam, communem nostram, qua literati sumus, matrem, adhuc sanctam rectam conservavit.

Neque tamen hæc ideo a nobis dicuntur, quasi fautores nullos, nullos advocatos invenisset grandæva mater academia, qui, ne inter tumultuosi seculi dedecora literarum lapsus & ruina numeraretur, strenue præcaverunt. Habet etiam adhuc Deus O. M. qui honorem suum, habet academia, qui salutem suam pro virili tueri satagunt; viros scilicet summo honore constitutos, & nisi mortalium ingratiissimi audire

ORATIO

\* Hæc oratio anno 1654, in comitiis academicis, habita fuisse videtur, cum procancelarius officium iterum administravit.

vellemus



vellemus, a nobis in aeternum nominandos. Hi sunt, qui tumultuantis plebeculae, aliorum scilicet perpaucorum nebulonum veneno perfusa, compescuerunt murmura, & imbelles contempnere minas. Et cum eo usque audacia proruperit quorundam hominum, dicam, an jumentorum, stupor & barbaries, ut in ipso senatu libellis supplicibus vociferationes, seu potius imprecationes nonnullorum e face seculi, de tollendis academiis rudere ausi sint; non sine indignatione summa, spiritu heroico & plane divino, honoratissimis ignorantiae patronis, patriae excerebratoribus, os vile obstruxerunt, parati omne nostrum periculum subire suo. Nec defuisse istiusmodi viros aut conatus testor celeberrimam toto orbe bibliothecam, irritis inimicorum domi forasque Augusto illi sacrario avide inhiantium votis, intactam; & si non libris doctioribus, at librario doctissimo auctam & ornatam. Ipsam testor academiam, fatali pene literarum interstitio emergentem, viris undequaque doctissimis, de religione & literatura optime meritis, recens referam. Hoc unum condonate, quod me indignum, inutilem gregi vestro ascribere voluerunt; hanc unam labem abstergite, cetera fulgent.

Iisdem succenturiatus processit magnum nomen nobis dicendum, auditores, *Honoratissimus Cancellarius*. Hic est, quem toties accepimus profitentem, se nolle honesto illo nomine diutius ornari, quam dignum tandem aliquid eo nomine efficiendi spes non minima effulgeret. Qui pietate & ingenii cultu, in subjugandis hostibus vel barbarissimis, plus retulit sub Deo suo opis & subsidii, quam ut se vivo & rerum pene clavum tenente, pietatem & ingenii culturam omnem pessundatas & conculcatas, triumphantibus illum victis & conjuratis hostibus, ab impietate & barbarie intueri possit. Illum, qui feros & erraticos domuit Hiberniae Nomadas, qui mores, virtutes, pudorem Scotorum monticolarum perspexerit, qui

Πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄετα, καὶ νότον ἔγνων,\*

posse tandem ipsam deperire barbariem, inhonesta est, & homine sano indigna cogitatio. Irato prorsus aversoque Deo res nostrae agitari viderentur, si primi, si soli sub ejus auspiciis pereamus; qui non tantum omni bello, sed & singulis praeliis, quibus toties providentiae discrimen subiit, victor evasit. Inauspicato sane togatam manum copiis suis adjunxisse censendus esset, si ea parte primum marcescerent triumphales laurus. Haud illi deerit procul omni dubio in re nostra procuranda divina illa indulgentia, quae reliquis omnibus inceptis ei ita semper praesto adfuit, uti *ἑὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς*, quod dicitur; ut illud ethnici poetae ad imperatorem Christianum decantare liceat,

*O nimum dilecte Deo, cui militat ether,  
Et conjurati veniunt in classica venti!*

Hucusque ideo, eo duce, victore Deo, ut libera & optimarum artium gloria celebris, non ut in iux & efferata evadat patria, contendimus. Quisquamne hominum adeo inverecunde stolidus, & mentis inops censendus est, ut gentem non ineptam, immensis laboribus, vigiliis, votis, lacrymis, suspiriis, tanto sanguinis, nummorum, possessionum dispendio, tot annos sudasse, ut sub desideratissimo reipublicae titulo asinorum clausum, vel jumentorum mandram conderet, putare posse videatur? Si qui vero, ut erit forsan unus & alter, ad bombardarum tonitru, tanquam ad cataractas Nili, ita obsurduerunt, ut rationis, ejus nimirum qua homines sumus, nihil possint aut audire, aut percipere; quin tandem, imo brevi sese explosos, & pessimo foetore, suorum tormentorum instar, ejectos sentiant, nullus dubito. Imo ausim dicere rempublicam nostram aut literarum fore fautricem, aut nullam: nisi funditus delere gentem (& religionem nostram) fortean rebus prosperis nimis fidentem, vagam, & tumidam, sanguine & cineribus iterum aspergere, & non indecoro pulvere sordidam reddere constituit Deus. O. M. non omnis morietur academia.

Maeste ideo este ingenio & virtutis gloria, probata juvenum corona, flos patriae, gentis honos, gregis Christi spes non minima: feretis protinus hic etiam voti & consilii nostri pretium & *ἑσπέρην*: nec segregata prorsus omnis spes est, quin ex vobis tandem emergant, quibus merito

*doctior orbis*

*Submissis tradat fascibus imperium.*

Vos etiam, doctores literatissimi, quoniam purpureae vestrae radiis ferundis etiam vulgi, utcumque ignobilis & indocti, nunc temporis sufficit oculorum acies, quin virtutum



& scientiarum splendore, laboribus & vigiliis ecclesiae & academiae causa susceptis, antiquam & debitam venerationem etiam oculatissimis extorquere progrediamini, nemo nisi invidia stupuit, aut fascinavit pietatis odium, ibit inficias. *Θεαλέγον γενήθημεν τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις*, & actorum nuda virtute stamus; nec pomposos titulos, ultiores honoris gradus, opima beneficia, principum aut magnatum favores, fugacis aevi blandimenta, affectamus, sed pro vita animaque magnae matris academiae contendimus.

Duram quis forsan exclamabit sortem & onerosam! & *o terque quaterque beatos*, quibus quotannis in scenam prodire, & choragio nescio quo phaleratis, mutas pene sustinuisse personas satis erat pro dignitate & honore; quibus ampliores redditus, titulorum veneranda gravitas, & adulatoriis quibusdam delinimentis facillime aucupatus principum favor, dederunt malignum spernere vulgus!

Alit, apage sis, ignava vota, & indigna suspiria. Natos nos potius in exemplar cogitemus, nec minimo ducamus honori, quod nos amicorum inimicorumque sub oculis tanto pignore certare voluit pater clementissimus, quod aliqua saltem rerum difficultate quid possemus experiri velit. Quod aliis ideo calamitas videtur, nobis sit virtutis occasio. Hoc ideo tantum, missis curis & querelis, metu & dolore ad hominum vulgus demandatis, nobis incumbit, ut vel scientiarum & virtutum nostra industria fructibus floreat, vel compositae & decenter aliena culpa in cineres suos dilabatur academia. Sed quorsum haec?

*Prudens futuri temporis exitum  
Caliginosa nocte premit Deus,  
Ridetque si mortalis ultra  
Fas trepidat. Quod adest memento  
Componere equus.*<sup>d</sup>

Quod officii ratio postulat, quod beneficia Dei O. M. flagitant, quod bonorum omnium vota expetunt, quod aliorum casus & ruina, quos perdendos dementavit divina Nemesis, docent, pietatem, religionem, virtutem, scientiam, diligenter colamus; ceterum rerum omnium exitus *Θεὸς οὐ γνῶσαι κείται*. Quid denuo faciemus, dabit Deus; quid hucusque fecerimus, paucis accipere, academici.

Cum vitiis, quae ampliori proventu inter mortales indies succrescunt, nobis & antecessoribus nostris commune fuit certamen. Dilabantem amnem novis semper ex fontibus minus forsan lucidis, imo turbidis aquarum fluctibus, subinde auctum & adimpletum omnibus vanitatis bullulis, vitiorum limo immunem quis potest praestare? Nempe socordium & impiorum parentum delicta, ineptiam, stultitiam, negligentiam paedagogorum, paucis exceptis, ignavi pene ubique pecoris, immerita luit academia. Ad spurciciem domi avide ingurgitatam hic resorbendam advolant nonnulli; & tamen quos huc vitiorum gravidos, & foedis domesticorum exemplis dehonestatos mittunt, ut extemplo fiant philosophi, & illico frugi evadant, expectant stulti parentes.

*Ὡς ἀργαλίον πρᾶγμα ἴσιν  
Δύλον γενέσθαι παραφρονέοντι.*<sup>e</sup>

Duram sane provinciam! Integros & sanos tantum summa cum artis gloria dimittant, quibus commissa est corporum sanatio: omnes seu artis defectus, seu artificum lapsus, longa nocte tegunt vespillones. At incuratos animorum morbos, & turgidos vitiorum inflatus, ubique, non sine summo inter imperitos nostro dedecore, circumferunt immedicabiles nebulones.

Huic autem malo remedium adhibendo, ut hanc saltem bene merentibus gratiam rependam, non defuerunt, imo profuerunt plurimum, cum hujus, tum superioris anni procuratores; quorum nimirum inculpatæ probitati, invictæ patientiæ, prudentiæ insigni, bonarum literarum promovendi studio singulari, industriae vero pene stupendæ, aliquid saltem pacis & quietis, si non multum famæ & bonorum morum, debere academiam est manifestum. Nec sine numine fuit, ut, deflexo paulum tramite, ad munus procuratorium vir ille promoveretur, qui ad vias rectas & regulares non sine summa diligentia & virtute non paucos reduceret. Porro in administranda re reliqua academica, collegiorum & aularum praefectos, laude illa, intelligentes tempora, ut nosceret academia quid sibi faciendum esset, defraudandos non esse, si



non credet ingratum seculum, fortassean dicet posteritas. Imo illorum ope & consilio, quamvis non decus aliquod aut nitorem assecuto, tamen sine insigni ulla togata gentis iactura, fasces deponere mihi ipsi contingat. Nec omnino sane inerti otio contabuimus, quamvis huc tantum rediit votorum summa, ut eo fruamur. Cetera de nobis fascibusque nostris, quod procul dubio præstat, taceo; neque enim unquam altius spiravi, quam ne commodioris hominis, peritioris rectoris, vigilantioris præfecti, prudentioris moderatoris, vices difficillimis temporibus suppleri, nimium lugeret academia.

Interea sciant amici atque inimici, imo exteri & posteri, quotquot honeste cupiunt rei literariæ, etiam qui cum ea nullum commercium volunt, neque ferias agere academiam, neque intra antecessorum septa (quasi doctum esse nihil aliud esset, quam doctos legisse, atque eorum sensus quamvis reconditos eruisse) sese continere; sed progressus, Deo hominibusque testibus, in dilatandis scientiarum pomœiis, in promovenda, una cum pietate & religione, re literaria quotidie ponere.

Testor theologiam, artium reliquarum dominam & magistram, cui ut prompte ancillentur prope est res nostra unica, non turbidam illam ex scholasticorum lacunis depromptam, nec communem illam tantum & disciplinabilem, a quamplurimis bonis sane viris, nec ineptis, in multifariis compendiolis traditam; sed liberam, puram, defæcatam, ex ipsorum fontium fontibus, adjuvante, imo totum opus perficiente, Spiritu & vi Dei omnipotentis, haustam, adhibitisque omnibus veræ philosophiæ & scientiarum adminiculis, qui ei vel adjumento, vel ornamento esse possint, indies efflorescentem. Intima videmus sacrosanctæ veritatis penetralia referata, abditosque vitalis paginæ sensus ceutos & propinatos: *Hinc lucem & pacula sacra*. Conciones ad populum non phaleratas illas, & ineptis verborum crepitaculis, ad aurem vani & imperiti vulgi tinnientes; sed pietatem, φιλοπρεπείαν, διδασκαλίαν in sacris γυμνασίοις spirantes, frequentissimas: exercitia quædam recens instituta, nonnulla postliminio restituta, recuperatam aliquatenus disciplinæ gravitatem, exulantem & triumphatam reductam pietatem, fas esset celebrare. Disputationes etiam theologicas redivivas memorarem, nisi absentium aliquorum negligentia, præsentium vero quorundam socordia fecisset, ut ex incepto illo honesto sane & conamine laudabili, academice ratiocinio, quam academicorum rationi, hætenus melius consultum fuisset. Absit tamen ut hinc tandem proventus ipsos sulcos oneraturi expectationi renuntiarem. Non enim tantum messem, quod aiunt, in herba habemus, summæ nimirum spei ad frugem & fructum juventutis; sed & est in procinctu veteranorum hæc contemnenda manus, quæ non tantum amicæ veritatis velitationi, prout pro more sit in academia, parata est; sed quæ Latiali Vejovi bruta fulmina e manibus excutere, & reliquas extraneorum copias civitati magni regis, Dei O. M. *deus* imminentes, minitantes dira, profligare & dispalare novit.

Et sane ad veterum nobis exequendum, nunquam post natum in orbe Christianum nomen, donis, quibus veritatis divinæ cultores liberaliter instruxit pater clementissimus, magis opus fuit. Quam enim, Deus bone! detestanda turba, quam foeda hæreticorum, fanaticorum, & enthusiastarum colluvies sponsam Christi sub ipsis sponsi sanctissimis oculis pæne rapit, stupratque? In eam scilicet puram, castam, undique *turba ruunt luxuriosa, proci*. Cum igitur,

*Ut jugulent homines, surgunt de nocte latrones:*

*Ut teipsum serves, non expergisceris<sup>a</sup>?*

Et quod ad cumulum addit, satis nequiter proventum est: quo enim quisque ab omni solida doctrina imparior est, eo majori cum supercilio, & confidentius de gravissimis quæstionibus iudicium sibi arrogat. Proveniunt oratores novi, stulti, adolescentuli, qui nec eruditi sunt, nec se non esse eruditos sentiunt.

*Ἀνδρῆδες* ergo, academici, nec amoeni recessus sopore perfusi, dulcedine exitio vicina, præsertim cum ὑπὸ παντὶ λήθῃ σκορπίος ὑποδύεται, finite ut ineptos, indoctos, βωμολόγους, vaniloquos, plus contra veritatem, quam pro veritate vos posse, sentiat Christianus orbis. Victorias quas reportarunt, quos egerunt triumphos Athenarum nostrarum Miltiades, Juellus, Rainoldus, Twissus, alique, recolite, mentemque & industriam Themistoclis induite, neque nobis vivis despectum Dei dominium, contemptam gratiam, conculcatum foedus sempiternum, impune ferant vel inscite bla-

<sup>a</sup> Horat. Epist. i. 2. 32.



terantes, vel elatiori cothurno rhetoricantes novatores. Undique circumstant observatores, qui mollitiem virtuti, errores veritati, tenebras luci, tumultus paci, quovis pretio a vobis præferri vellent, & ut præferantur expetunt, & expectant.

*Hoc Ithacus velit, hoc magno mercentur Atridae.*

Sunt qui literarum imperium se solos obtinuisse autumant; & quia ceteros mortales fastuose præ se contemnunt, vos istiusmodi esse, qui facile & merito contemni possint, efflicti cupiunt. Sunt etiam qui vitiorum & ἀκαρίας nostræ obtentu academia- rum ruinæ avidissime inhiant, & altera parte urgent, punguntque. Una autem virtute utrosque circumveniamus, ut non sine summo dedecore illos fastus & περυσιοφονίας, hos invidiæ & ignorantiae pudeat, poeniteatque.

Ad sospitatorem pertinet industria nostra, ipsum Christum habemus agonothetam. Nostris vigiliis, studiis, laboribus, innititur veritatis gloria, religionis honos, artium & scientiarum splendor, ipsiusque demum non minima reipublicæ salus & felicitas. Ignaviam, animalium ratione gaudentium labem & opprobrium, senescentis seculi pestem pæne unicam, ignorantiae, tenebrarum, sordium, & vitiorum omnium proxe- netam, literarum & literatorum contemptus prodromum certissimum, diligenter, imo animose excutite, juvenes dilectissimi, germana matris proles, insurgentis seculi quo- quo verget pars nobilis futura. Hæc illa Circe est, quæ nonnullius spei adolescen- tulos, luxuriæ blanditiis pessime incantatos, foedissimis inquinatos sordibus, & in porcorum haram & volutabrum pellectos quotidie deturpat. Invigilate ideo, me- mentote vos sacramento teneri, imo in arenam descendisse; frustra fugam, latebras, recessus meditamini; nequicquam hominum præjudicia, temporum iniquitatem, mag- natum supercilia erga gentem togatam, patriæ ingratitude, quæ ossibus ejus vix pepercit, causamini. Aut dimicandum vobis est fortiter, aut quales quales artifices estis, pereundum turpiter. Placet etiam nobis orium, sed magis officium; placet amica studiis solitudo, sed magis studiosis, siqua est, benefica contentio. Eamus una igitur, erectis animis, comitantibus vigiliis, studiis, precibus, inimi- corum quorumcunque tandem, qui male volunt luci & veritati, vices dolentes, quo fata academiae, & omni casu benignior divina providentia, vocant. Mens serena, sua forte contenta, mundi contemptrix, nihil nisi quod vile, sordidum, inhonestum, anima Christiana, generoso & libero pectore indignum, horrescens, nobiscum eat. Hæreat in funambulis, præstigiatorum acetabulis, stupeat Babylonios, agyrtas, astro- logos, malignum & imperitum vulgus; stupeat, dum respublica tributum imponat, quod pendeant astrologi, quod olim, teste Suida<sup>1</sup>, factum est Alexandria, nomine βλακηνόμιον, quia solum stulti ad eos accedunt. Βλαξ enim apud eos idem ac *fatuus* & *amens* fuit. Minas, arma, intentent atrocis sævitiae & feritatis homunciones, scientiam, veritatem, virtutem ipsam rideant, disteriis excipiant, ὅσα ἐκ οὐδασι εὐλασθημέναι, siderati nebulones; ne grave rediret superstitionis & tenebrarum seculum timeant meticulosi; Spartam nos, quam nacti sumus, ornemus, serio militemus, in veritatis castra irruamus, cælum ipsum virtute petamus, nil desperandum, vexillum attollente *Hon. Cancell.* Christo duce, & auspice Christo.

<sup>1</sup> Virg. Æn. ii. 104.

<sup>2</sup> In voce Βλαξ.

## ORATIO



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## \* ORATIO III.



**D**E LASSATAS artium omnium & scientiarum vires, & defatigatam ipsam oratoriam denuo sollicitare, academici, nec opus est, nec animus. Quid possit facundia, ut in omni literatura viget valetque, ii, quos & muneris ratio, & efflorescentis ingenii fervor, alacriores & magis oneri idoneos reddiderunt, evidenti testimonio ante aures oculosque auditorum posuerunt. Elegantiarum omnium quod reliquum est, vices supplebit unica æqui ac recti conscientia, qua etiam tripudiare Musas, vetat vicinus fraterni sanguinis clamor. Si quid de laboribus & angustiis academix dicendum restat, ne ferias agere perpetuas videatur, id mihi negotii dari, ut ea enarrem, maxime arridet. Nempe ea apud nos, auditores, stat lege res literaria, ut gravissimas totius anni curas unius vel alterius dieculæ latitia compensatas habeamus. Neque illos forsân, quibus res divinas pariter, ac eas, quæ apud humanum genus inter primas ponuntur, ornandi cura incumbit, palæstræ isti hilarioribus pro more elegantis crebrius interspersæ diutius immorari debeat. Non quod solenniorum academix comitiorum honori, quorum, Deo ita gratiose disponente, triplicata jam vice lubens saltem pars aliqua fui, quidquam detractum iri velim; sed quod asperiores recessus sanctiores quas colimus Musas quærere, profiteri æquum est. Prout ideo benevolo erga nos almæ matris animo, quo nobis operosum hoc, quodcunque sit, studiorum nostrorum levamen sacrum esse voluit, gratulari liceat; ita gravitatis ejus & prudentiæ, quibus hæc bonorum negotia, malorum otiis promovendis nimis opportuna, incitatis passibus peragi jussit, infra laudem id omne est, quod dicere possumus. Nimirum lubrica virtutum statio est, quibus in confinio vitiorum positis, proclivis ad deteriora lapsus. Ea est, pro dolor! humani ingenii pravitas. Non enim tantum, dum vos pulverem inter & sudorem, industriam in scholasticis hisce exercitiis defigitis, habent quod ignaviæ, quod luxuriæ suæ prætexant improbi; sed & inane gloriolæ aucupium, futurum superbiæ & desidiæ fomitem, hujusmodi inceptis, ad captandos sæpius quam par est eruditorum plausus destinatis, minime malorum suggestui aliquoties adhærere compertum est. Sufficiat ideo nonnullis hucusque vela ventis explicata porrexisse, aliis in margine ambulasse; ne ingruat turbo, ne dilabantur ripæ, jam contrahenda vela, jam referendi pedes. Nostri autem rerumque nostrarum, cum temporis occasio, & auditorum reverentia, rationem aliquam efflagitare videantur, eam, moræ cum simus jam omnes impatientes, strictim & quam fieri possit paucissimis absolvam.

Quoniam vero eos, qui fecerunt, proxime excepisse, qui præclara eorum facinora celebrarunt, semper æstimati sunt, ne res academix, per se satis amplæ & magnificæ, vero minores appareant, alicui, qui quæ sentit polite & copiose possit eloqui, & velit, provinciam hanc delegatam cuperem. Sed prout mihi, me juri & legibus almæ matris subducere, religio foret; ita supra bonum atque honestum de vestro candore anxium esse & sollicitum, pæne esset flagitium.

Qualem vero se gessit academia, quæ tulit fecitque, quorum gratia aut odio flagravit, quibus fautoribus usâ dignitatem aut pristinam sustinuit, aut amissam recuperavit, quo luctu, quibus casibus eam exercuit summus rerum omnium arbiter, fusius

\* Hac oratio habita est anno 1655, in solennibus academia comitiis, cum procancellarii munere jam tertio functus esset.



exponentem haud feret temporis angustia. Pauca ideo rerum capita summatim sunt delibanda.

Ne vero expectatione elati despiciatui haberent referenda auditores, sciant adhuc plura nobis fuisse de salute, quam de gloria certamina. Ut scientiarum pomœria dilataremus, cum tot annos Annibal fuerit ad portas, nemo nisi iniquus & sortis humanæ ignarus expectaret. Quibus nos nondum periisse magnum non est, iis qui perierunt instruendos amandamus; pluris sane constitit unius anni salus, quam multorum pridem gloria & honor. Quanto labore, qua industria, quibus vigiliis & molestiis, quo temporis, studiorum, fortunæ, amicorum dispendio, quo in ambiguis consilio, in extremis animo, res nostræ hæcenus securitate septræ fuerunt, neminem spero posthac experturum. Magistratus nostri in ipsa salutis discrimina fortunarumque communium incidisse honor sit, vel dedecus perpetuum.

Hinc vidimus armatas Musas, & Palladem cum hasta; neque quicquam famæ, aut gravitatis apud bonos ea re decoxit academia. Imo quod se suaque prudentia dignissimum est, fecit. Etenim in publicos hostes omnis homo miles est. Neque artes ullas profitemur, quæ naturam dediscere cogant. Extrema expectare, nihil ausos, maiorum est, vel mulierum. Unico pacis amore ducti classicum cecinimus, neque cuiquam mortalium periculum ingerere, sed propriæ saluti tempestive consulere in votis fuit. Hunc animum qui criminantur, ut omnis juris, humani pariter ac divini, nostrarumque rerum conditionis ignaros se ostendunt, ita eorum scommata & conviria facile contemnimus. An ingenii cultus, quo nihil melius neque amplius in natura mortalium est, socordes & torpescētes redderet, etiam inter sacrum & saxum positos? Sane dum ipsum hoc vixisse peccatum non sit, nec vituperationi opportuna sui tutela esse posse videtur. Quam vero ab iis, qui nihil egregium aut laudē dignum aggredi aut ausi sint, aut possint, aliquod candoris vel grati animi indicium expectare, extremæ stultitiæ sit, ne nulli omnino videantur, quia præterea nihil sunt, lubenter eis maledicere permittamus. Sed tamen vix occasione hac arrepta me retineo, quin in totam ingratorum manum, quorum vitio nihil non mali inest, invehar. Id tantum nitar, ut hominibus bono publico natis, mederi aliorum incommodis solitis, auctor sim, ut quæcumque boni & magnifici animi fructum, iis, qui cum servili pæne sint conditione, nihil generosum aut honestum sapiant, erogaverint, nisi frustra niti, neque aliud se satagendo nisi odium querere, cordi sit, eam omnem humanitatem non in homines insuamptam, reputent. Sed pessimum illud genus hominum, quod diligentius metuit, quam meminit, quod cum pæne nihil unquam boni fecerit, tamen beneficia pro debitis exigit, utrum plures sint qui criminis arguant, an qui ejus vestigiis insistant, incertum est. Quoniam vero in humanum genus, egenum plerumque & opis indignum, qui ingrati animi testimonium ediderunt, peccare videantur, eos tacito bonorum omnium iudicio, eique apud ipsos, hoc est malos, tribunali, ubi nemo nocens absolvetur, remitto. Quodcumque conatur, præmii securum agit generosum pectus, & ipsa sibi satis mercedis est mens recti conscia. Interea haud vulgari lætitia perfunditur academia, quod nemo tandem gentem suam rogaram destructam velit, nisi qui ipsam reipublicam funditus pessundatam cupiat, cum non ita pridem ab ipsa maxime metuit respublica. Ita est rerum vicissitudo. Quæ autem tumultuante plebecula, ferocientibus militibus, nutante senatu, strenue undique calumniantibus sycophantibus, omni casu major meliorque providentia immunem ruina salvamque præstitit academiam; ne bonorum omnium amore jam flagrantem florentemque desereret, summa contentione interpellanda est.

Vulnus interea, quamvis pharmaco tempestive adhibito sanatum, quod tulimus, dissimulandum esse dolor pietasque vetant. Nempe principis facultatis inter primarios professores ob multijugem scientiam & raram eruditionem pæne principem amissimus. Illum, inquam, cui (ea est inanis sæculi vanitas & ignavia) nihil unquam nisi ipsæ literæ fuere opprobrio. Quæ autem post summi viri fata, candidissimi pectoris quondam hospitium, invaserunt lites, odia, studiorumque partium inanes luctas, ne pudenda retegantur & recrudescant vulnera, prætereo. Equidem ut dignitatis & auctoritatis tuendæ gratia, qui gradum magistratus obtinerent in academia, illud honoris & præmii haberent, quod optari possint, cum ipsius rei necessitas efflagitare videtur, tum summa a maioribus prudentia constitutum est. At nudam *negociam*, & quemcumque dignitatis locum, per se clara esse aut magnifica, aliudve amplius, quod vere sit venerabile, præter eorum qui ea sustinent virtutem, homines leviculi tantum opinantur. Hic pes figendus: tantum veræ laudis a magistratu adepto apud

æquos



æquos rerum æstimatores reportabis, quantum virtutis & diligentiae in illum attuleris. Proinde sordidam reddere, quam ambis dignitatem, suillum est, ipsa vero ut te indignum evehat, fieri non potest. Cum vero apud nos praefectura gradus ea habent ex fundatorum munificentia annexa bona, quæ ignavorum etiam animos titillare, & sui desiderio rapere apta sint; quod vix ullos ad dignitatis fastigium evectos annumerat, nisi quos inter alios aliquo modo eminere ipsa invidia fatebitur, academiae impense gratulandum est. Cladem autem, quam tanto orbata lumine horruit theologia, doctissimi successoris modestia, eloquentia, candore, & doctrina propulsatam gaudet, prædicatque.

Variis interim hic vivitur moribus, quia maxima apud nos est ingeniorum varietas. Nonnulli, ventri penitus dediti atque somno, ætatem per inertiam & socordiam trahunt, suntque potius, quam vivunt; in re congerenda alii plus æquo sunt solliciti; aliarumque mixtarum artium non insolentes, habet, habuitque semper academia, quorum piget pudetque. Qui frigide, ideoque frustra ambierunt Musas, & repulsam passi vel penitus sordescunt, vel insaniunt, in corporis gaudiis pæne tandem evanescere. Ex scelerala vero paucorum licentia, & depravatis moribus, de ipsa pronunciare academia, illorum tantum est, qui vel assurgente aliorum virtute minores & invidi, vel cæco partium studio abrepti, de infamia nostra, quam de probitate sua, magis sunt solliciti. Cænum, lutum, eluviem habent amœnissimæ urbes, nec quid aliud magis expositum, aut in oculos viatorum prius incurrit. At ineptus esset, qui omnem urbem, ubi lutum est, Lutetiam diceret. Nec candidiores, nec sanctiores animas magnam partem, quam nunc amplectitur, unquam aluit academia. Per diversoria, trivia, plateas, cænopolia, ubi nonnullæ forsitan occurrunt studiosorum larvæ, per triduum oberrantium hospitem censuris non stamus. Collegia, bibliothecas, musæa, scholas, oratoria, templa, typographias appellamus. Qui ex iis diligentiae, pietatis, bonarum literarum, virtutum omnium nullum specimen, fructum nullum percipere potest, non tam male lippus est, aut in sole caligat, quam hostis ex professo, cuius de rebus nostris definire non est.

Quot vero hucusque habuit inimicos academia, tot habuit & triumphos: neque famam nostram vexarunt ulli sine certissimo suæ dispendio. Non autem Vulcanium scutum, non murum aliquem æthereum adepti, non amuleti nescio quibus instructi, sed puri æterni numinis favoris præsidii septi, omnium propulsavimus injurias. Quoties nudi, egeni, ope omni humana destituti, petulantissimorum ingeniorum convitiis cruentati, in sinu summi optimi patris recumbentes, rei nostræ conficiendæ curam ei detulimus; toties non tantum securi e vadis emerimus, sed & victores omnia secunda & felicia sumus experti. Qui jacentes ad spem erexit, erectos summa spe explevit, beneficiis, honoribus auxit, cumulavit; qui efflorescere, & nitorem hunc qualem qualem assequi dedit, ille mihi semper Deus erit.

Neque tamen adeo ingrati sumus, ut quæ eximie de nobis meruerunt optimi quique inter mortales literarum patroni, aut aspernari, aut oblivisci audeamus. Imo hinc memoriæ immortalis, & in omne ævum ab invidia oblivionis vindicandi decoris, qui beneficentia ulla academiam demereri statuerunt, sunt securi; quod cum iis, qui ingrati animi vitium & pestem non tantum penitus sciunt, sed æternum execrantur, rem se habere, facile intelligere possint.

Primo autem mihi celebratus ultima oratione, jam celebrandus hic venit summus sub Deo rerum nostrarum arbiter. Sed quid ego de tanto viro? Cum duæ artes sint, in quibus viri principes studium ponere debeant, militaris nempe & civilis, quibus omnis stat publica virtus, illeque communem hominum fortunam egressus esse merito æstimandus sit, qui alterutram feliciter, civium suorum bono administraverit; qui utramque vero mediocriter procuravit, vix celebretur; hic nostro saltem seculo solus est, qui tum hanc, tum illam ita expoliverit, ut quam maxime ornaverit haud facile sit definire; utrumque sane, supra quod dici potest, feliciter & processu usque ad invidiam faulste excoluerit.

*Res gerere, & captos ostendere civibus hostes,*

*Attingit solium Jovis, & caelestia tentat:*

ut canit poeta. Atqui procul omni dubio in republica bene legitimeque administranda tanto major gloria est, ea quam splendidissimi effundunt triumphi, quanto ingenii bona, virtutes pacis, religionis honos, virium ostentationi, cædi, & sanguini antestant.



Ille vero tantus ac talis, ceteris omnibus major, hoc solo seipso minor esse voluit, ut secundi ordinis titulum inter suos pergit numerare, quo lubens primitus susceptum nostri patrocinium feliciter usque propugnet. Nec satis habuit, nominis invicti umbra discrimen academiae tot annos jam defendisse; sed insuper munificentia & largitione gratissima, celeberrimum toto orbe librorum thesaurum, grande illud non academiae tantum, sed & gentis nostrae decus, bibliothecam Bodleianam auxit & locupletavit. Felicem Bodlei animam! quae tot tantosque virtutis suae aemulos, tum famae auctores invenerit. Dum innumeros, qui id sibi negotii solum crediderunt dari, ut laute baccharentur, nepotes longa nocte premit, aeternumque pressura est oblivio; tu nominis tui gloriosam memoriam usque adeo propagasti, ut neque ulla annorum series, aut fuga temporum ei tenebras offundat. Felix Bodlei! non omnis morieris; dum reges, principes, victores, quidquid uspiam antiquae virtutis, aut verae eruditionis monumentum inveniri possit, in tuo sacrario reponere certatim gestiunt, suisque imaginibus penetralia tua decorare non dedignantur. Hic princeps, illic comes, inde praesul, longo demum ordine, variis honorum tabulis insigniti, viri laudatissimi fecerunt, ut jam totius orbis ore consono celebretur Bodleius. Adsit jam modo numen propitium, quin ad invidendos scientiarum & virtutis apices, summumque in orbe literario dignitatis fastigium ascendat academia, causa nulla est cur dubitemus.

Cum itaque per se, suos, aliosque ita cumulatissime nobis prospexit benignissimus pater, quid nos interea, academici? An per ignaviam & socordiam aetatem agere, genio, vitiis indulgere, torpescere, animo esse remisso, & suavia in praesentia quae sunt, prima habere, deinde emori, priusquam quid sit vivere sciamus? Absit sane. Imo quicquid praeclarum & egregium, quicquid apud mortales laude dignum haberi debet, illud omne a nobis jam meritissime expectari videtur. Nihil vulgare, nihil non summa pietate & diligentia excoctum, cum bonorum omnium vita, tum Dei immortalis beneficia efflagitant, quod invidis oculi doleant, quod horreat Roma, quod nolit impia turba, id finis, id assequi conemur. Vanam, nudam, sterilem religionis professionem, histrionico, cui renuntiavimus, numinis cultu nihilo meliorem, quantocius amoliamur. Nil viris gravibus, & scenae servire nesciis, & qui in aliqua modestiae fama esse velint, indignius, quam ex mera toga ambire laudem, & honorem crepantes, id omne, quod verae laudis & honoris quasi palatium est, susque deque habere, persuasissimi finis. Intelligat denuo, quam cordatis omnibus & contemptui & ludibrio sit, proletaria ista togatorum turba. Non sumus ut olim in velabro olearii, ubi mutuam laudem malis moribus invicem praestare mos erat. In militiae disciplinam adducimur, ubi cuique statio quam agit, pro virili tuenda est, aut deferenda turpiter. Praeterierunt fatuorum halcyonia, neque superbire ex titulis, aut in imperitum vulgus ex ephippiis ferocire ultra licet. Unicum si excipias studium partium, severe judicat, nec amplius hominum larvas miratur populus.

Macte ideo virtute vestra, doctores literatissimi, sacrum theologiae depositum, veritatis *καὶ ἀληθείαν*, religionis honorem, verae sanctimoniae laudem, doctrinae famam, cuncta a plerisque deserta, nequiter & turpiter conculcata, tanquam Spartam vestram, quam coepistis, ornare pergite. Sycophantarum latratibus, invidorum, & temporum mutationibus, exacerbatorum moribus, hostium incursionibus, haecenus obstitit virtus vestra & industria. Candorem, numinis reverentiam & cultum, morum gravitatem, ceterasque animi & ingenii dotes, quas hucusque in vobis suspexerit academia, indices excolite magis, donec triumphata ignorantia, invidia, omnique deterisa arugine, tanquam in consummatissimum virtutum omnium emporium oculi animique, tum nostratum, tum exterorum in academia conversi sint. Quod a seculi peste & supplicio, errorum teterrimorum, qui ubique paene grassantur, tabe & sanie integros & sanos custodivit filios alma mater, vestrae in concionando sedulitati, exhortando fervori, disputando qua opus est acumini, virtutum exemplo, sub elementissimi patris cura & tutela acceptum ferre se libenter testatur. Quamplurimi autem hic in theologia vere studiosi, sacri ministerii candidati, in huius laudis partem assumi meritissime postulant. Hosce nempe vigore summo lacertos, olim ecclesiam & scholas, rostra & cathedras amplexuros monet academia. Quibus utrum modestiam, doctrinam, ingenii acumen, an animi submissionem magis gratuletur, haereo.

Vestro, doctores, eorumque in aere quantum sit respublica, nisi vos multo majori debitorum mole Christo & ecclesiae devinctos esse haberem consentes, in memoriam lubentissime revocarem. At Christi servis, caeli candidaris, utcumque inter mortales exceptis, tantis cum sint beneficiis pignerati, quibus in aeternum non erunt solvendo, melior quam vobis fors contigerit haud expectanda, vix optanda videtur.



detur. Merces est obedientia nostra, & ipsum opus ministerii præmium satis amplum. Ne vos teneat philosophorum immensa laudum cupido, multo minus hodiernæ apud pontificios idolomania illecebræ, venter & ambitio, aliave fugacis ævi blandimenta; quæ futura sunt, imo quæ bonis adsunt, divini amoris pignora attentius perpendite. Hæc animos in obsequium rapere, in officio petagendo vires renovare & augescere possunt, & factum dabunt.

Vosque, lectissima juvenum corona, academia, patriæ, ecclesiæ, non minor spes, quam illi gloria, quoniam vobis neque exempla, neque præcepta desunt, quibus ad proficiendum in omni virtutum genere incitari possitis, quæ a vobis merito sperantur, attendite. In specula sunt omnis ordinis homines: quemadmodum se unusquisque vestrum gerat, observant. Malorum interim & ignavorum corrumpendi artibus vos nimis esse opportunos, cogitate. Neque enim laus est, ibi esse probum, ubi nemo est, qui aut possit, aut conetur corrumpere. Fucos, quoad possumus, depellimus a præsepibus nostris: cæterum cordatis omnibus ignavorum exitu ad diligentiam acrior stimulus vix adhibetur. Qui stolidorum & improborum hominum cætervas vagas & inutiles, extrema fere aut timentes, aut ferentes, vel flagitiis omnibus coopertas, sibi in cœnopolis, popinis, angulisque sædissimis & spurcissimis plaudentes, strenuis & sapientibus omnibus satis spretas & neglectas, contemplari velint, vix socordiam, tripudia, & choreas, quibus juventutis florem bonis artibus ereptum discant, imitabuntur.

Sed ulterius definendi non estis, auditores. Ex invidorum oculis jam jam evanescentis magistratus nostri, cujus tamen adhuc neque piget neque pudet, vel acta referendo, vel confitendo omissa, ullamye reddendo rationem, invitis vobis, ipse non coactus, satietatem imponere nolo. Floreat academia, vigeat inter studiosos concordia, industria, religio, numinis reverentia, & insurgentis cujuscunque virtutis æmulatio; exulent studia partium, cæcus sui amor, avaritia, ignavia, quæcunque ingenuos animos, generosa pectora, mentes Christianas minus decent; quod dispendio pacis, famæ, studiorum, vestris studiis obsequens, inserviens commodis, hucusque litavi, me mei haud pœnitebit.

Sed & adhuc lugendi jure donandi estis, academici; neque enim hic gradum sistit fatum, aut dolor. Quale literarum decus, quod morum exemplar nuperrime nobis eripuit veneranda providentia, enarrare volentem cohibet mœrens animus, inclususque dolor. Illum, inquam, quem candor, & justitiæ soror, incorrupta fides, nudaque veritas, bonis omnibus charum; quem in rebus agendis prudentia & industria literatis utilem, omnibusque acceptum reddiderunt; quem ipse amicum habui summa necessitudine conjunctissimum, pro dolor! amisimus. Nisi publica obstarent ecclesiæ fata, & effusus reclamaret martyrum sanguis, unde privato luctui indulgere vetat pietas & pudor, eruditi capitis desiderio modum ponere nimis esset difficile. Procuratorem summa bonorum omnium expectatione munus subeuntem, ereptum fato deflevit in vespertiis fraterna facundia. Sed, apage sis, inanes gemitus, & nequicquam ingeminata vota. An mortis nostræ tenebris, affectionum vitiis, studiorum involucris, laborum tædio, æmulatorum odio, curarum anxietate, rerum omnium incertitudine & instabilitate æternum solutos, deplorandos censeamus? Absit, academici. Quæ nos urgent & premunt, quæ utrinque nos male habent, ex alto despicunt felices animæ. Dum pietati, virtuti, laboribus, quod reliquum est perbrevis ævi, dicamus, magnis exemplis aliquo modo digna molimur; Deo curæ erit nostri rerumque omnium exitus.



## \* ORATIO IV.



**E**st muneris nostri ratio, academici, ut cum deliciarum omne genus satias tenuerit auditores, in ipsa dimissione, cui jam inhiat erudita cavea, paulisper a me detinendi sitis. Elatos spe secessus, & ad censuram peragendam gestientes animos, cum nostrorum hominum, tum hospitem gratissimorum videre videor. Quid cuique sapuit, quid nauseam peperit, ut quisque nostrum vel cordate, vel saltem minus inepte partes suas egerit, prout feret fors aut occasio, iis, qui semper auditores vexatos esse dedignantur, lubido est exponere. Usque enim adeo in locum præcipitem hic nos committimus, ut æquis atque iniquis pariter nostri potestatem faciamus. Ea enim sub lege & conditione, illiberali satis, rem hisce comitiis literariam gerimus, ut quæ nos pro more & honore academici, atque officio quod nobis incumbit, præstare conemur, mox fabula fiant, atque per ora vulgi traducta cachinni sapius censura excipiantur. Neque enim ullo consilio regi potest mos iste pessimus, qui in se neque consilium, neque modum habet. Ita voluerunt, ita iusserunt antecessores, quorum hic solum auctoritate nitimur, & imperium ferimus, ut profana, sacra; levia, seria; procacia, atque rerum gravissima uno nisu effunderet ingenio varia, atque animo dispar soboles academica. Sed nequicquam coit male facta gratia. Optima quæque statim signa relinquere, & oblivione sibi consulere, coguntur. Ita enim quæ suavia sunt in præsentia, quamvis ægritudinem mox conciliatura, prima habet juvenilis studiosorum fervor; & vix aliquem ipsa virtus, aut eruditio, locum tutari possit, ita tumultuantur, clamant, pugnant concalescens turba, de iis quibus nihil opus est ut audiantur, ut obliviscantur plurimum. Pudet dicere, qua celebritate, si modo celebre id dici possit, quod dictu turpe est, ubivis volitant sarcasmodorum & diæteriorum ineptiæ, cum rerum vere memorabilium ipsa vestigia obterit oblivio, & æterno premuntur silentio. Neque sane iniquius ulla concertatio comparari potest, quam ut medios inter tumultus & strepitus, dum γελῶν αἰδὺς insurgit loci temporisque genius, cum lepore & facetiis contenderent virtus & eloquium. Imo quia urit, quia secat, liceat, auditores, inveterato huic atque adhuc gliscenti huius loci dieique malo paulo altius ingemiscere. Atque hoc libentius agam, quoniam quicquid sit illud doloris, aut bilis, quod cuiquam indignabunda conciliare possit oratio, ἡμῶν ὁμοθυμαδὸν lenire, atque iis quæ magis ad palatum sapiunt, veluti condire, priusquam ad finem vergat, animus est. Præterita recordanti subit istorum temporum miseratio, quibus, quo quis ad bonis inhumane conviciandum accesserit audacior, quo ad modestiæ limites transfiliendos alacrior, eo magis famæ & gloriæ se reportaturum speraverit. Manserunt etiam hisce comitiis, morientis uti speramus, licentiæ vestigia. Sed graviora tulimus: neque enim unquam celeberrimum hunc conventum ad finem perducere potuimus, quin vel oratorum alicui silentium imponere, vel quod multo gravius est, contumelias pati, necesse habuimus. Delicatis ingeniis, si quæ sunt, age, evellantur vitiorum fibræ.

Est etiam unde sororix academiciæ vel curam & diligentiam desiderare, vel vices dolere cogimur; nempe quod impuros nebulones, moriones eruditos, non tantum alios, quos non nisi Aristophanis æmulis in scenam producere fas esset, diæteriis petulantissime agitare; sed & quia magis aperte dicendum est, mendaciis atque

\* In comitiis academicis habita est hæc oratio, anno 1657, cum jam continua serie quintum fuerat prorexcellarius.



calumniis in innocentium hominum famam involare, vel volens permisit, vel invita est perpeffa.

Satis diu jam, ni fallor, ferram hanc invicem se proscindendi convitiis reciprocavit utriusque academiae proles; neque enim dentatas istius hominum generis, quod quid sit pudere nescit, quas vocant, facetias, aliter dici posse, aut debere censeo. Contendimus utique quis jocosè magis, aut magis false, si modo consuetudini insulsissimæ quid salis inesse dicendum sit, alios populo deridendos præbeat. Putidum certamen, & personatis indignum histrionibus. Veterem comœdiam, γελαιοποιον, cordatorum hominum famæ dicaciter insultantem, uti obtinuit Macedonum contumeliarum impatiens potentia; ita ubivis fastidivit, contempsit, explosit tandem ethnicismus. Eam jam deperimus scilicet, & vulgari scena ejectam, postliminio in academiarum comitia reducere saragimus. Egregiam vero laudem! mimas, histriones, balatrones publicos, evax, tandem pæne prævertimus! Etenim dum huic sententiæ, seu infantiæ potius non renuntiamus, dum istiusmodi nos agitant intemperiae, si quis mox ganeonibus per popinas, tabernas, lustra, decantanda deprompserit, ille sapit solus, reliqui volitant velut umbra. Utinam sane tandem per eos, quorum honori parco (ut neminem enim ostenderet oratio nostra, nisi qui se ita voluntarius obtulerit, ut in eum non incurrere non possim, statui) utinam, inquam, liceret inveteratæ huic consuetudini obviam ire; utinam juventuti academicæ liceret esse piæ, sobriæ, modestæ; & ne, qui sunt ex malorum morum quasi colluvione nati, bipedum, imo, quod sæpius accidit, quadrupedum impudentissimi, in ullo pretio apud nos diutius esse viderentur.

Harum vero ineptiarum non ita pridem pertæsus, ausus est non nemo, qua erat inscitia, ordinem hunc rerum nostrarum, quem semper vetitum, condemnatum semper, semperque retentum videret, convellere. Voluit nempe ut a comitiis academicis, gravissimorum virorum frequentissimo undique concursu celeberrimis, exularent scommata, diæteria, mendacia; ut in omni doctrinæ genere exercitiorum atque disputationum uberiores haberemus proventus; convitiis, maledictorum, ineptissimorum jocorum famem; ut inertium hominum & helluonum, qui nihil aliud norunt, nisi vivere per dedecus, & præ risu quotidie emori, qui solennibus nostris se affatim ingerunt, nulla ratio in posterum haberetur. Criminis vero hujus inauditi, audaciæ, furoris, sceleris auctorem velitis, ut ei in oculos involetis, aut saltem ejus in famam? Atqui eccum ipsum:

*Me, me, adsum, qui feci, in me convertite ferrum,  
O juvenes, mea fraus omnis.*

Imo quæ & quanta jamdudum ab hominibus odio, amore, studio partium incitatis, aliisque, qui nihil otiosa vita, plena & conferta voluptatibus, præstabilius esse ducunt, ob ipsam hanc causam, quodque in ipsorum verba, antiquas quod attinet ineptias, jurare ausus non sum, sim perpeffus, quidque rumoribus super hac re ubivis inique sit dispersum, hominem neminem arbitror esse, qui ignorat. Neque sane conatus istiusmodi destinans mea me fefellit expectatio. Etenim an ego ea, quibus hac rerum conditione invigilaveram, ut vulgo cum candore exciperentur, vel senserim, vel speraverim? Non tam eram rudis, non tam ignarus rerum, tam omnis, Deo gratias, prudentiæ expers, ut animum meum lactando in vanam spem illicerem. Aliquid vidi, aliquid audi, aliquid legendo & quærendo cognovi; contra inveterata præjudicia bono publico invigilantem, nisi convitiis, plaustis onustum, & tantum non oppressum, inveni neminem. Neque hæc ideo a me dicuntur, quasi ex obscurorum quorundam hominum & nugacissimorum ineptiis & stultitiis, aliorumve ingrata credulitate aut invidia, anxietatem exhaurirem; cum non tantum conscientia propria, sed & studiorum & factorum apud eruditos, & malorum artium insolentes, saltem venia, diæteriorum scenæ ac vulgi convitiis sim securus.

Sin autem acius hic egi, quam mea fert consuetudo, aut ratio vitæ, qua omnibus morem gerere, omnes perferre & pati, quoad fieri potest, in animum induxi; peto a vobis, academici, ut tantum orationi meæ concedatis, quantum justæ indignationi, si modo indignationem parerent convitia & contumeliæ, concedendum putetis. Usque vero, per me licet, fruantur in posterum maledicendi voluptate, qui nec recta sibi consulere, nec bene consultis uti norunt. Quantas itaque turbas, quos clamores, in rejiciendis nugis, quiescentibus, eruditionis vero & scientiarum omne genus exercitiis inducendis, stabiliendis, excitaverit, quos provocaverit nonnullorum industria, de qua quicquid



dixerim, minus esset, ne invidia & partium furorē perciti literiones aliqui nimium contabescerent, ulterius non prosequar. Optimi autem conatus atque pulcherrimi conscientia recti, ea in praesentia voluisse, quibus posterī si qui sint fruuntur, sat habeant, quibus cura & cordi est aut purioris religionis honos, aut severioris eruditionis & scientiarum progressus: alienae virtuti invidere necesse est, qui propriam non habent.

Quoniam vero ex iis, quae non fecit, calumniarum satis tulerit academia; videamus porro, num ex iis, quae fecit, gloriam ullam aut laudem apud aequos rerum aestimatores sit adepta. Annus jam decimus agitur, ex quo communi patriae incendio crepta academia, & securius altiusque radices egerit, & liberius progeminare coeperit. Quibus vero rerum adversarum anfractibus involuta, quibus impedita molestiis atque periculis exposita, *occulto velut arbor aëo*, hucusque succreverit, & saepius antehac exposui, neque amplius in memoriam revocare opus est. Non defuisse, qui a gentis rogata, extremum pene discrimen saepius adeuntis, partibus steterint, frequentissima, quam hodierno die conspeximus, studiosorum concio testimonio esse potest. Quid enim? an privatorum copia erat hostium praepotentium ferociae, avaritiae, audaciae modum ponere? vel minas intonantibus, & verborum fulmina, frena injicere? Imo qui nihil divinum, nihil ope mortali grandius in declinantis rei literariae subsidium & fulcimentum venisse sentit; illum rerum divinarum & humanarum pariter socordia, & negligentia supina laborare certum est. Si quid autem vel a nostrum quopiam prudenter & consulte est susceptum, vel duce & auspice Christo perfectum feliciter, quo academiarum aut saluti, aut honori, aut commodis consultum fuerit; id sane sine summo seculi dedecore, quemcumque tandem vultum aut supercilium induerint calumniatores, ei vitio verti non potest. Quo vero quisque vir melior est, eo libentius laude atque fama caret, factorum sensu atque conscientia contentus. Neque ii solum forsan academici dicendi sunt, qui cum illis alibi nihil opus esset, intra muros academicos se tuto retinuerint; ipsius autem academiae aut incolumitatem propugnare, aut honore augere, nec velint, nec valeant. Ita demum optime praesse videntur ergastularii. Sed & praesto nobis fuerē potentiorum subsidia, quae grato animo semper recolimus, & quorum virtuti & favori optima quaeque accepta ferimus. Eorum vero, cum rerum gestarum gloria immortalitati consecrantur, in laudes spatari, aut recensere beneficia, temporis cancelli, quibus arctamur, nos prohibent. Providentiae interea & bonitatis divinae gloriam, in amplissimis quos ex iis intra breve tempus fructibus percepimus, lubet contemplari.

Quae anno abhinc decimo, aut eo plus minus, pene deserta jacuit academia, quos jam propitii in Christo numinis favore frera, atque irrigata caelitus, doctissimos oratores, subriles philosophos, disceptatores acerrimos, egregios mathematicos, pios, acres, vehementes verbi divini praecones, felices criticos e grege suo in gremium ab ipsa pueritia exceptos, foros, educatos, ostendere non possit? Quos ego hic nunc prius laudem? vos doctores, aliosque collegiorum & aularum praefectos, eruditos, pios, qui recta consilia, egregia exempla dedistis: an juventutem ipsam, quae vestris vestigiis inherere, consiliis obtemperare voluit? Si ea demum sit civitatis cujuscunque ultima calamitas, atque hinc solum misera esse videatur, cum neque qui prudenter reipublicae consulere possint, neque qui recte cogitatis acquiescere velint, in ea sint; quidni ea felix dicenda sit, ubi multi bene praecipunt, atque plurimi sunt, qui cordate obtemperant? Uti enim vim atque virtutem ducorum sensim debilitat, atque animis languorem incutit, discipulorum segnitie aut pervicacia; ita juniorum industriae necesse est ut iter intercludatur, ubi nemo est, qui cohortatione sua & exemplo animum iis accendat. Quid autem jam possit vita in literis posita, exemplis atque praeceptis instituta & munita, quasi in speculo conspiciendum praebet academia. Quod gaudeant boni, quod invidis oculi doleant, quod suo splendore aliis caliginem inducat; ejus jam unice desiderio per aliquot annos flagrant literarum & disciplinae nostrae alumni; imo eo usque progressi sunt eorum nonnulli, ut quemadmodum apud antecessores non haberint exempla, ita an apud posteros inventuri sint amulos, vereor. Quid ego singulos commemorem? theologos, *θεολόγους* retinentissimos, quibus scilicet antiquius fuerit veritati divinae, ea, qua decet, animi submissione inservire, quam pravarum opinionum portentis, aut veterum philosophorum quisquiliis, inauspicato denuo erutis, nominis celebritatem aliquam assequi, atque enitescere? Atque utinam sane tam libenter aliqui nobilitate nominis quali quali carere potuissent, quam ecclesia aut pii omnes eorum lucubrationibus carere possent. Sed postquam famae libido quenquam invaserit, neque eam explendi nisi veritatis periculo spes ulla est, omnem per errorum



anfractus vagandi licentiam præfidenter sibi sumit, atque mori mavult, quam non per fas aut nefas eminere. Quid egregios mathematicos, quibus, cum neque a priscis feliciter inventa accurate docere, neque aliorum inventis addere, satis fuerit, ipsi etiam communem virorum doctorum sortem prætergressi, nova, mira, stupenda, ex intimis naturæ rerum penetralibus eruta, ignota priscis, admiranda posteris, non sine tum ipsorum, tum academiarum laude & fama, tam dilucide & ornate in lucem eruditorum extraxerunt, ut, ea studia quod attinet, quicquid uspiam est doctiorum & candidiorum animarum, iis ultro palmam deferre paratum sit? Alios lubentissime adorea afficerem, nisi me, qui in hoc dicendi genere neque promptus sum, neque paratus, laudandorum multitudo, & meritum splendor ac decus obruerit. Imo intelligo quam scrupuloso difficilique in loco versor, quam invidiæ atque obrectationibus opportuno; dum aliquibus laudationum nihil satis est, aliis quicquid nonnihil est nimium. Aliquorum ideo cedamus modestiæ, aliorum audaciæ; parcamus personis, res ipsæ recenseantur. Igitur magnum quid aggredior, quod cum omnes pæne ævo seculi graves simus, atque sub ipsius mundi mortalitate gemat humanum genus, licentia & intemperantia ubivis fere dominantibus, academicorum mores non vereor commemorare. Præceptum sane & perversum malevolorum iudicium, quinquatribus Palladis, aut Musarum hisce feriis innixum, dum advenarum turbæ mista paulo licentius vagatur juvenus academica, declinare cogimur. Si quid hic secius quam oportet accidere videatur, in eos cudatur faba, qui ne interciderentur peccandi lenocinia & occasiones, summa ope nisi sunt; quæ nunc extra septa hæc publicitus aguntur, ego vix ea nostra voco: pacata tempora studiorum atque studiosorum recessus appellamus, nisi illic plurimos optimarum legum vigorem ingenuis moribus exprimentes; paucos tantum ad præscriptum honestos & sobrios; quisquilias, nebulones, sceleribus inquinatos, nisi aut nullos, aut paucissimos, inveniet æquus rerum arbiter, causam non dicimus, quin summa infamia flagremus. Age, hic in ius ambulemus. Diem nobis dicat, cuicumque vel ex ira, vel ex invidia volupe est. Pro tribunali nos lubentissime sistimus. In novum discrimen adducimur. Non fecimus, non cogitavimus, falsi testes, ficta crimina: quæ voces ad iudices dici solent, adhibemus. Hic serio triumphamus; hic habent, quod gratiæ impudent divinæ grati animi; neque hoc opis est nostræ.

Neque multorum in academia, aut ipsius academiarum erga externos, religionis ergo, & bonarum literarum gratia peregrinantes, pietatem oblivione sepelire fas esse iudicamus. Quot vero egregios juvenes, multarum ecclesiarum spem atque segetem, quinquennio jam proximo elapso sustinuit, aluit, fovit quorundam liberalitas, consultius siliere puto, quam leviculam arrogantiam suspicionem apud quemvis mortalium dicendo subire. Verbo dicam: non tantum *ἀδελφάνους* nobis bibliothecarum usus, ac mortuorum indulgentia eos excepit (quis enim non esset sine sumptibus liberalis, sine dispendio munificus? si modo hoc esset liberalem esse & munificum) sed in dimensionum consortium, in aularum instructum cautione divina secunda pietas eos admisit. Neque tamen in hac re aliquid reperio, quamobrem laudaremur. Officium nostrum fecimus, atque utinam fecerimus. Eorum, quæ fidei nostræ concredidit antiquorum munificentia, non proprietarios, non ex asse heredes, sed condos promos fidos & frugi, qua ex illorum liberalitate quam plurimorum bonorum inopia ac rebus angustis subveniretur, nos esse voluerunt. Cum itaque cumulatissime nobis prospexerit divina providentia, an nobis vivere, genio indulgere, ætatem voluptatibus agere, licebit, neglectis, spreto iis, quibus cum sit res angusta domi, tamen ingenii cultus gratia, quo nihil melius, neque amplius in natura mortalium est, per infinita rerum discrimina e regionibus remotissimis in celeberrimum hoc literarum emporium tendunt? Absit, academici, imo nihil Christianis, nihil pietatis & purioris religionis cultoribus, nihil viris doctis, nihil aliorum munificentiarum alumni indignius, quam deo Lucio inhicere, aut eo frui, quod revera est alienum, nimium esse tenacibus. Verum enimvero quicquid nos peregrinorum causa fecimus, id maxime nostra etiam causa fecisse videri possumus. Cum enim vita plerumque sint innocentes, proposito sancti, insolentes malarum artium, pietatis, industriæ, diligentiarum, ac grati animi egregia specimina inter nos ediderunt. Hinc etiam per exteras oras latius diffusa effulgent academiarum decus & honor. Hinc laudem suam a malevolorum & invidorum hominum calumniis prorsus vindicavit; ut fugitivis, atque ob scelera fugatis, qui infeste nobis adversantur, & os ferreum perfricantes ubivis in academiam invehunt, vix auris, nedum fides apud probos, & partium studiis vacuos, uspiam adhibeatur. Omnium jam libris & linguis prædicatur Oxonium, ita ut postquam deleverit adversariorum convitia,



convitia, atque de invidorum calumniis triumphum egerit, ne celebritati suæ minor cedat, jam solum in votis habeat.

Non defuere interea, quibus vel propria malitia ductis, vel aliorum libidini morem gerentibus, dum quam ipsi meruere, poenas dederunt, non sine summa infamia, nec minore scelere, volupe fuerit non tantum tranquillam academiae conditionem sollicitare, sugillare gloriam, antiquos ritus evertere, sed & colubrinis molaribus ipsam matrem depascere, atque illotis pedibus conculcare. Manent adhuc tibivis, & sunt superstites Cuthæorum posterī, qui dum votis fruitur felicibus academia, se genuinam ejus esse prolem plenis buccinis crepant; at ubi in arctum coguntur gentis togatæ copiae, atque urgentur angustiis, animo statim gladiatorio ad eam viam affectant, & una cum iis, qui novercali odio prosequuntur literatos, devorata, quam prius simulabant, modestia, palam congregiuntur; quippe qui id solum in votis habere videantur, ne non nostris periculis delectentur malevoli, ipsi optimæ invidiæ & odii victimæ. Hos consulunt in tenebris, hos publice adsciscunt patronos, contumaces academiae alumni, dum grandævam matrem, longo retro tempore summæ libertatis jure gaudentem, extrancum ferre imperium, atque æmulum sub ditione captivam detinere, volunt. Si ex horum hominum votis cecidisset eventus, si ex animi sententia nacti fuissent calumniatores successum, nisi multi una Flaminii clamassent, ἡλδοίεω ἔσω Ἑλλάδα, neque suo jure, neque favore principum, neque antecessorum industria aut virtute, neque antiqua disciplina ulterius fruitura esset academia. Et sane usque adeo hostium extraneorum sustulimus impetum, arma retudimus, tot reipublicæ μεταμορφώσεις superavimus, & tot publicis enatavimus periculis; ut non nisi a domesticis, a nostratibus, si qui tandem futuri sint, qui ad perdendam rem literariam sobrie sunt accessuri, nobis cavendum sit. Sed nolo Babylonios tentare modos:

*Prudens futuri temporis exitum*

*Caliginosa nocte premit Deus<sup>b</sup>.*

Quænam autem negotiorum moles nostrorum nonnullis incubuit, dum consiliis aliquorum pravis & præcipitibus mederi, adversari aliorum nequitia, obviamque ire, periculis undique ingruentibus, necesse habuerunt, cum in summa rerum omnium discrimina inciderimus, qui negotio huic nostro in posterum sunt præficiendi, dicent. Sine causa ideo, at forsitan non sine culpa, ut non tantum qua elegantia, sed & quo lepore, quibusque facetiis essent præditi ostenderent, id maxime nobis vitio vertere quidam voluerunt, sine quo neque ipsi tuti, neque nos probi & honesti esse potuimus,

Sed ut modum tandem orationi constituamus, necesse est. Hucusque ideo, auditores, ope divina freti, non tantum ex periculis evasimus, sed infestissimos quosque hostes vicimus; saltem victi, prostrati, loco pulsi non sumus. Vicit pietas, ingenuus candor, morum integritas, atque omnia recta tentandi audax industria, neque sub jugum nos misit utcunque corrupti seculi genius. Numerosam fama & celebritas, bene moratam disciplina, doctam industria peperit almæ matris sobolem. Quam concepit in re religionis sententiarum divortium, fovit studium partium, incendit ira & vindicta, gravem & pæne insuperabilem usque adhuc pertulimus invidiam; neque tamen adeo abjecto sumus animo, aut demisso, ut non eadem quæ prius, imo majora tentare spes sit, & votum. Adsis modo propitius tu, Pater optime, laborum omnium nostrorum auctor atque præmium, sit tibi curæ atque cordi pusilli gregis incolunitas; tuque, Jesu Christe, tuorum omnium perfugium atque salus; tuque etiam sanctissime, atque infinite potens, beate Spiritus, erige virtute tua ineffabili ad omnem pietatem & industriam academicorum omnium animos. Ita demum ea seges, quæ adhuc pæne in herba latet, & votis & expectationi bonorum omnium amplissime respondebit: quod faxis pro infinita tua gratia, Domine Jesu. *Amen* \*.

<sup>b</sup> Hor. Carm. iii. 29, 29.

\* Ne quis in celeberr. Oxoniensis academia institutis minus versatus orationis hujus argumenti similitudinem cum ea duarum proxime precedentium, in occasione haud dissimili, vitio vertat, rei istius causam ex Parecbolis Statutorum percipiat, quarum Tit. vii. sect. 1. §. 18. cui inscriptio est, De conclusione comitiorum, hic adscripsimus: Peractis exercitiis, & doctoribus in qualibet facultate creatis, consuevit vicecancellarius, monitu procuratorum, comitia concludere solenni oratione; in qua res gestas superioris anni, beneficia præsertim universitati collata, & alia, quæ ad honorem academiz faciunt, prout ipsi videbitur, commemorare in more positum est.



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## \* ORATIO V.



QUOD semper in votis habui, academici, ut quamvis indignissimus, non tamen ultimus audirem academiae procancellarius, cum id mihi hujus diei felicitas propediem expediet, venerando huic senatui, totique academiae non possum non impense gratulari. Et quidni sane tot procellis agitato, tot negotiorum fluctibus pæne obruto, tot undique contrariis ventorum ictibus oppugnato, in portum jam tandem naviganti sibi etiam gratulari liceat? Etenim quorum praefagitione quadam, studiis depulsus, laborum atque itinerum tædio contritus, rerumque alienarum satur, succumbentem animum toties refeci, otium & quietem tantum non assecutus esse videor. Quanti autem mihi fuerit fasces deponere academicos, quam immani ambitione id dudum sum conatus, qua tandem maximorum virorum sententiam pæne inverecundia expugnavi, neque vestra nosse interest, neque mea reperere refert. Quod ideo non ante decursum totum quinquennium illuxerit vobis mihiq; dies hic expectatissimus, e rerum est quam patimur conditione. Sidera supremo motori proxime remota, eoque alterius seu arbitrio, seu necessitate rapidissime agitata, progressus suapte natura lentissimos, sed placidos, & ab inferiorum turba securos, sortita esse accepimus. Ex quo supremo gentis nostrae motori propius accesserit academia, utur raptu rerum omnium caelesti, quo populus agitur, suo orbe placidissime secunda velocius circumvolvatur; motum tamen sibi peculiari & proprio ut lente procederet, necesse habuit. Superato itaque tandem, quamvis in longum producto discrimine, sedes ubi fata quietas ostendunt, lubens desideo. Nec hinc solum, quod evasi, gloriari licet, cum & hoc nonnihil, imo magnum sit; sed rate licet quas fata, quod nec naufragus, nec praedonum licentiae expositus, ad littus appello. En navem vestram academiam fluctibus plusquam decumanis factatam, sospitem tamen & illaeram, etiam quod fidem pæne omnem superat, fortius solito juncturis omnibus compactam, dum tonat laevum, atque malacia est, periti naucleri curae illico committendam. Hoc tantum mihi restat, ut composite moriar. Salva res est, salva academia, salva litera; sit salva pietas, & jam mori lubet. Moriar itaque, academici, idque ne morerer, officio pæne simul, & fato functus. Eruditos vero gemitus, aut doctos morientis singultus nolite expectare. Qui conscientia niti vivis didicit, elegantia moribundus haud opus habet.

Neque magistratum nostrum celebraturus adsum, quem tamen aequè suscepisse pater, ac jam deposuisse dolet; a quo utroque tantum absum, ut ab omni indecoro aut inhonesto longius abesse nollem. Verum eninvero nisi paulo iniquius comparatum esse existimassem, ut qui magistratum deponerent, suarum laudum essent pracones, & res suas gestas aliorumque vitia narrarent, nonnulla forsitan, eaque nec penitus ingloria, quæ primus, quæ solus in magistratu gessi, celebrare possem. Sed non tantum ab ea consuetudine longissime abhorret ratio, atque voluntas nostra; sed ut inde divortant eorum omnium mores, quibus cordi est magna vivere potius, quam loqui, & cuicunque tandem benefacere, quam a pluribus laudari, necesse est. Munus autem, quod honoris loco (quem a votis, quam a meritis, si fieri possit, longius abesse vellem) non accepi, haud laborum tædio contritus abdo. Et suscepti, & continuati, & jam tandem depositi ratio ad vestra commoda referebatur. Quia me aliquo modo rebus vestris subsidio, vel adjumento esse potuisse judicant alii, magistratum inivi; quia commodiori homine ac peritiori meo iudicio vobis opus est, illo libenter abeo. Et jam serena mente privatus fio, neque ab ira eorum,

\* Habita est hac oratio ad academicos, anno 1657, quum, alio procancellario electo, munus illud jam depositurus fuisset.



quos sciens volensque injuria affeci, metuens; neque gratias eorum, quos demereri statui, expectans: nam prioris ordinis nullos plane esse audacter pronuntio; posterioris aliquos fuisse, meminisse me haud decet.

De rebus autem vestris, quæ pro more dicenda habeo, paucis accipite. Annus jam quintus esse desiit, ex quo academiae moderamen, indigno licet, mihi commissum fuit. Quis fuerit eo temporis atque abinde gentis togatæ status, quæ rerum nostrarum conditio, nemo homo est nostratium, ut opinor, qui ignoret. Per primum biennium vulgi fuimus & vulgaris fabula. De discrimine nostro fortunisque communibus ex astrologorum hemerologiis & chartis Mercurialibus disceptatum est inter lippos & tonsores. Neque quisquam hominum erat adeo infelicer stupidus, ut de fatis nostris aut timere, aut sperare ei non contingerit. Nempe sic voluit summus rerum arbiter, quo minoris pretii apud mortales esset quicquid est mortale: neque imperiorum venustatem, & summa totius mundi decora invadente marcore, ut florem illibatam sola gereret academia, forsitan æquum erat. Causam interea nostram, cui vel periculum facessere nefas erat, alex subjectam ancipiti, qui pro virili propugnare ausi sunt, oppido fuere pauci. Imo eo devenit erat dementia, ut e partibus gentis togatæ stetit, violatæ religionis & pietatis nomine censeretur. Ontne autem illud, quod apud viros graves male audit, atque est vere flagitiosum, perquam liberaliter quotidie in vos impegere malevoli. Qui in rem nostram paulo æquius essent animati, ita tamen rerum suarum saregerunt, ut precibus obtusi, & quotidianis pane convitiis fatigati, nihil aliud quam verba dare, moras necere, & quæ pie de conclamatis dici solent, proferre sustinuerint. Rebus itaque omnibus turbatis, & inter sacrum & saxum positis, ope omni humana destitutis, non *ad mirandum* miraculum, sed cælitus prospexit pater clementissimus; postquam quo tandem evaderent audacia, rabies, & ignorantia nonnullorum, a quibus meliora expectare fas erat, liquido nimis constitisset, omnia eorum consilia, conatus omnes dicto citius ita dissipavit summus ille rerum omnium arbiter, ut rebus suis vix, aut ægre considerent, qui nudiustertius nostris avidissime inhiabant. Præter ingens dedecus, & in omne ævum duraturam infantiam pravi illius incepti adversus academias, quod irato prorsus aversoque Deo nequicquam iniecerunt malefani homunciones, nihil prorsus reliquum est. Quamdiu autem erunt, qui oratione fusa facta & consulta fortium & sapientum cum improborum ignominia sempiternis monumentis prodere possint, conatus illius eos forsitan poenitebit. Atque hic finis fuit, hunc terminum obtinuit prima magistratus nostri solennior periodus.

Vos autem, academici,

*Cyclopea saxa*

*Expertè revocate animas, maestumque timorem*

*Mittite: forsàn & hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*

Nonnullorum forsàn, dum ex scrupulis, quos nobis injecerunt malevoli, animi dubii fuimus, ea ratio, qua par erat uri, habita non fuit. Sed ut eorum, quæ non jussi fecimus; sic etiam illorum, quæ ob culpam alienam omittere non potuimus, accuratam reddere rationem nullo jure tenemur. Qui curis ager, pluribusque diversi generis negotiis intentus, omnia non tantum curat, & disponit sapienter, sed & feliciter perficit, is mihi communem mortalium sortem excedere videtur; quod de meipso sentire esset impium, prædicare inverecundum. Si genio indulgens, si socordia torpescens, si in re conquirenda sollicitus, si avi illecebris astrictus, malisve artibus quibuscunque tandem addictus, in rem vestram peccavi, quin summo dedecore e gremio matris ejiciat in æternum, causam non dico. Imo illum, qui ut exercitia pietatis, & in omni genere artium & scientiarum antiquitus prudenter instituta rite & sedulo peragerentur curavit; qui in utroque genere nova aliqua ad summam omnium utilitatem, & non levem academiae laudem, ut instituerentur auctor fuit; qui nulli sumptui, nullis laboribus, quibus res literaria vel sufflaminari depressa, vel aliunde adjuncta promoveri potuerit, parcendum statuit; vestro fratrum genio & fato, quod ultra etiam bonorum omnium calculis approbaretur, saltém aggredi voluisse, non difficilis est conjectura. Sed verbo dicam: more plane divino evenit, ut salutem omnem, laudabilemque omnem progressum soli Deo accepta referremus. Illum rerum nostrarum conficiendarum in se curam suscepisse vel eæci conspiciant. Quoniam vero grates persolvere dignas non opis est nostræ, ne mortalium ingratißimi habeamur, urinam saltém tandem aliquando, quibus sumus pignorati beneficiis, supra ceteros mortales serio perpenderemus. Heu!



pudet, quoties mores nostros, imo multorum ignaviam, superbiam, vanitatem, & proterviam, etiam nonnullorum erubescenda crimina ad calculos revoco. Hæccine, inquam, fieri flagitia? Hi mores nos decent? hæc studia? Ubi pudor? ubi pietas? Unde grati animi indicia accersam? Ingenue agam, metuo aliquoties ut apud nos subster divina præsentia. Expergiscimini tandem, quibuscunque aut Dei gloria, aut pietatis honos, aut literarum salus cordi est. Expergiscimini, inquam, & alium nacti coryphæum, ne beneficiis cælitus onusta, vitiis obruta pereat academia, defigite industriam. Non ego jam animos verborum lenociniis lactare, aut dicendi facies admoveere contendo: nugæ & Siculæ gerræ. Dei causam ago, licet indignissimus: facta tecta maneat altissimi gloria: ne erga *disputant* optimum maximum insoleseat cruditorum natio, quæ apud facundiæ ædituos inter prima ponuntur, susque deque habenda duxi. Liceret ideo alta voce almæ matris fortunæ ingemiscere; nisi juniorum quorundam indomitam stultitiam, socordiam, & superbiam, imo magistrorum nonnullorum deplorandum religionis contemptum & pervicaciam, aliorum in cælestibus cæcitatem & ignorantiam referre pueret. Nam quæ plorare jubet pietas, dicere vetat pudor & verecundia. Neque sane usque adeo mentis oculos perstrinxit dolor, aut indignatio, quin plurimos omni virtutum genere excultissimos & quotidie videre, & sine fine laudare possem. Habet, Deo gratias, academia, qui inter literatos primas obtinent, quorum illibata pietas laudis nostræ beneficio haudquaquam indiget; sed nisi coram, & in os amicos celebrare moribus nostris nimis esset absonum, celeberrimos doctissimosque viros parè innumeros adorca lubentissime afficerem. Nollem autem silentium nostrum illorum laudibus & honori fraudi esse, qui in sustinendis academiarum negotiis, propulsandis periculis, in bene legitimeque ejusdem regimine promovendo, enixiorem posuerunt operam. Me quod attinet, qui sine illorum ope aut consilio oneri imposito penitus impar fuissim, imo nullus, immortales una omnibus gratias habeo, & quæcunque vel strenue vel prudenter malarum artium insolentibus gessisse videat, iis omnia lubentissime meritoque accepta fero.

Nec sine grata memoria memorandi sunt, quos per decursum jam magistratus studium *σωτηρίας* habui procuratorum nonnullos. Imo ausim spondere, quod ad referendas gratias, quantum quantum in me est, neminem promptiorem vel paratiorem aut offenderint, aut forsan sint inventuri. Ipse vero, quæ a quibusdam invidia & livore percitis, aliisque studio partium abreptis, simultatem mecum ultro ambientibus, indigna passus sum, conquerer; nisi dignitatem illam, quam propter contabuerunt, depositurus ansam omnem contendendi & obloquendi iis præripere statuissem. Id tamen dicam, quia dicendum est, nisi animo, uti spero, Christiano nonnulla dissimulare decrevissem, quæ merito egregie & palam contemnere, etiam ulcisci potui, eorumque injuriis & contumeliis tenebras dare, quorum amicitia mihi nihil unquam opus fuit, non adeo forsan pacem & commune otium alia meriti colerent. Favete linguis, academici: quod nonnulli dominium indigitarunt, ego duram servitutem, & periculosa opus plenum alex & expectavi, & sum expertus; ut nisi vestro candore, fide, & sapientia fretus, eorumque, quæ ad academiarum emolumentum faciunt, studiofissimus, id oneris, cui ferendo impar sum, nunquam sustulissim; imo ut statim a suscepto munere, ne diutius fatali huic curarum Caucaaso illigarer, non illico summa vi contenderim, quod aliorum imperium ferre coactus sim, non quod ipse imperare vellem, in causa fuit. Sed post multas alias, easque varii generis, cum religiosas, tum civiles, peracta tandem etiam est & hæc vitæ nostræ scena; qua quod non scenæ, sed sub Deo vestris commodis servire animus erat, conscientia, & conscientia infinite major Deus testis est. An decenter, scire, & *scire*, an spectatoribus tripudia injiciens partes meas egisse videar, perinde curo, ac eorum facta, qui nunquam nati sunt. Quæ in Dei Opt. Max. gloriam, *pacis salutem*, utilitatem academiarum consului, vel gessi, ei curæ erunt, qui nos miseros *humanitatis* ope sua sublevar, gratia instruit, favore protegit, ut investigabili plane sapientia collata omnia sua sancta exequatur. Ut autem in demandata provincia tuenda *scilicet* *scilicet* me esse conscium etiam atque etiam pernego; ita omnis culpæ me esse *expartem*, nullaque reprehensione dignum, stultissimus essem, si opinarer. Id vero *scilicet* triumpho, quod non capularis senex, aut silicernium, rude sum donatus, & quod minus saltem inter eos, qui ad res seculi & negotia publica spectant, ultimum vitæ actum peregisse videor. Quod annum vitæ agens alterum supra quadragesimum non infimum locum in castris, in curia, in academia tenui, imo summum, qui meæ sortis & conditionis homini in nostra republica *conferre potest*, quodque in omnibus me ita gessi, ut neque pudeat neque pigeat gessisse, id gratiæ & misericordiæ divinæ in solidum imputandum est. Etenim

quicquid



*quicquid sum ego, quamvis  
Infra Lucili censum ingeniumque, tamen me  
Cum magnis vixisse invita fatebitur usque  
Invidia.*

Dumque communi hac luce frui dabitur, vitæ antea suavissima recordatio non minimum erit angustiarum levamen; illis enim placuisse, qui nobis universis & populo placent, aliquam laudem esse duco. Ut itaque per aliquot annorum spatium eorum, qui in patria nostra consiliis & armis facile principes erant, etiam illius viri, quem nos ut maximum, ita consultissimum, & post homines natos fortissimum novimus, consuetudine & commercio uti mihi contigit; ita summa necessitudinis jura cum pluribus in orbe literario dictatoribus, in illustrissima hac academia, inire datum est. Habet autem quodcumque genus hominum, quod admirer; habet etiam, quod merito displiceat: de quo omnia bona dicere possumus, aut qui in omnibus contemni debeat, nemo est. Homines sumus; qui secum, aut partium, quas impensius colit, assertoribus sapientiam & pietatem natas esse, & morituras sentit, ille solus reliquis omnibus postponi meruit.

Jam valete, academici; . . . . . nominum in universitatis matriculam inscriptis; . . . . . ad doctoratum admissis; ad gradum autem magistri . . . . .; baccalaurci . . . . .; amissis per multos annos professorum stipendiis, recuperatis, solutis; nonnullis muneribus haud contemnendis sublevatis; juribus & privilegiis academiae contra quosvis malevolorum conatus propugnatis; arario decuplo aucto; pluribus ex omni ordine in academia ad diversa honorum, & beneficiorum genera promotis; exercitiis novis inductis & stabilitis; veteribus rite peractis; morum reformatione sedulo tentata, profligatis quibusdam rabulis nequicquam ringentibus; laboribus innumeris; sumptibus prodige impensis, cum sapius morti proximus vestri causa odi hos artus, fragilemque hunc corporis usum mentem deserturum; spretis vulgi convitiis, & superata aliorum invidia; vos plurimum salvere & valere jubeo. Mihi gratulor successorem, qui me hoc onere expedire possit; vobis talem, qui quicquid in rem vestram peccavit nostra incuria, in integrum restituere potis est.

Tibi autem, vir doctissime, honorem neque proprio labore, nec votis adeptum, adeptum tamen, una cum universa hac eruditorum cavea gratulor. Quemcumque velis antecessorem animo revolve, unius virtutem, alterius eruditionem, tertii gratiam, meum, qui nihil amplius sum, quinquennium tibi ex animo precor. Maecte virtute tua, vir ornatissime, sub auspiciis tuis floreat academia, cumque sis egregius aliis artibus, ne sis mollis aegritudinem aut invidiam pati, cetera omnia levia erunt. Dura autem est conditio spectatae virtutis, magna inde expectantur; vix ab ea grata sunt, quibus stuporem injicerent incognita. Præstantissima etiam aromata foedare contendunt muscæ & vespæ. Nemo unquam fuit virtute & eruditione insignis, quem non statim exceperit invidia. Sed quo me duceret orationis filum nescius, hic incidendum curavi. Ego antiquos labores, notas vigilias, omissa studia repeto: vos, academici, vivite, & valete.

Hor. Sat. ii. 1. 74.



ORATIO



\* O R A T I O VI.

Ad V. A. RICHARDUM CROMWELLUM.



**M**INORA illa sceptrā, *Vir Amplissime*, quæ manibus, quibus ipsam pæne librat Europam, portasse magnus parens vester non erubuit, insurgentis gloriæ & decoris non contemnenda omina, ad pedes tuos provolvit academia Oxoniensis. Si tibi ingentiori spiritu se gerere, quam pro conditione, si fastu quodam intumescere videbitur gens togata, quod non minoris patroni in clientela & fide esse voluerit; id nimio ejus favori, qui amplexu suo eam tanquam sortis immemorem ad amplissima quæque aspirare jussit, imputandum est. Ejus vero jam in laudes spatium, aut recensere beneficia, cum omnes optima omnia ei accepta ferre gestiunt, atque ipse factorum gloria immortalis sit consecratus, haud opus est. Viri itaque omnium, quos extulit seculum hocce heroum ferax, prudentissimi & fortissimi elogia consulto prætereo. Quocunque tandem vergat res Anglicana, ibit in seculum, fuisse principem, cui cordi fuerunt & insulæ gloria, & religionis honos. Postquam autem vir ille maximus ad solium pæne evexerat musas, atque ipsas tantum non regnantes coluit orbis Britannicus; cum unius tantum dominationis patiens respublica, literarium & Platonicum imperium ferre nequiverit, ut proxima tamen esset in conditione, atque non nisi sub spe imperii, aut saltem merito serviret, laudabili & tuta ambitione laborare, suavissima pristini honoris recordatio coegit academiam.

Habes ideo, *Vir Ampliff.* per innumera rerum discrimina, multo labore, multis studiis, vigiliis, precibus, hucusque conservatam pietatis, literarum, modestiæ, temperantiæ causam, qua nihil melius, neque amplius est in natura mortalium, tutelam obnixè ambientem, salutare orantem patrociniū; illam ut suscipias, amplectaris, foveas cura atque indulgentia illius tantum cogitationibus minoribus & secundis, a quo es secundus, bonorum ubivis omnium & vorum est, & expectatio. Καμηλίον vero hoc, atque ingens antiquæ pietatis & munificentiae depositum, quamvis tibi, viro in amplissimo dignitatis fastigio posito, honori esse non posse videatur; ne pudori sit aut vituperio, & propitius quem hætenus in Christo numinis favor nactus est, & doctioris orbis cultus & reverentia effecerunt. Quæ vero & quanta ab hominibus, ira, odio, studio partium incitatis, per annos aliquot jam proxime elapsos passa sit academia; quibus rerum anfractibus involuta, periculis exposita, hucusque succreverit;

\* Cum hac oratio inter auctoris schedulas sua manu exarata inveniretur, superioribus hic adjungere visum est. De tempore autem & occasione illius supra diximus, in Orationum inscriptione.



qua contentione & studio causa pietatis, religionis, & severioris disciplinae cum iis congressa, qui nihil otiosa vita, & plena, & conferta voluptatibus praestabilius esse ducunt, firmata sit; quidque ei ope omni mortali grandius in subsidium & fulcimentum venisse constet, silere mallem; quam molestae querimoniae suspicionem apud quemvis mortalium subire. Ex diuturna perturbatione, per te forsan, *Vir Ampl.* lucem & portum intuebitur academia. Habet vices hasce conditio mortalium, ex adversis secunda, ex secundis adversa nascuntur.

Floreat ideo sub tuis auspiciis cum ipsa academia, tum quaeque in ea patrocinio tuo, bonorumve laude digna sunt. Floreat doctissima atque optima spei numerosa juvenus, germana matris academiae proles, insurgentis seculi quoquo vergat pars nobilis futura. Floreat pietas, ingenuus candor, & iustitiae soror incorrupta fides, morum integritas, atque omnia recta tentandi audax industria & prudentia. Hisce salvis, ibimus, ibimus lubentissime, quo fata academiae & omni casu benignior divina providentia nos vocent.

## \* ORATIO VI.

AD V. A. RICHARDUM CROMWELLUM

IN ORA illa scripta, Vir Amplissime, quae manibus quibus ipsam  
pene libere Europam, portante magno patens vestri non credibile  
insurgens gloria & decoris non contemnenda omnia, ad pedes  
tuos provolvit academia Oxoniensis. Si tibi ingratum igitur se  
gerere, quam pro conditione, si tibi quodam intuitu videli-  
tur gens, quae non minus patriam in clientela & fide  
esse voluerit; ad amplius tuum cum tantum  
fortis immemoriam ad amplius tuum quodque aliquid iustitiae, impu-  
nam est. Eius vero iam in laudes ipsam, aut recedere debetis, cum omnes op-  
tuna omnia ei accepta fore gestum, adeo ipse laetatur gloria immortali sit con-  
tans, huius opus est. Viri itaque omnia, quos ex illis seculum hocce huius  
tax, prudentissimi & fortissimi elogiis condito praetico. Quocumque tandem ver-  
gat res Anglicana, id in seculum, huius principum, cui cordi fuerit de iustis  
gloria, & religionis honore. Postquam autem vir ille maximus ad solium patre eve-  
rat miles, atque ipse tantum non regnantes coluit ordis Britannicus; cum iustis  
tantum dominationis patris respicient, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
diverit, ut proxima tantum esset in conditione, atque non nisi sub hoc imperio, aut saltem  
interio servit, iustitiae & a se respicient, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
cordis coeque academiae, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
Habet ideo, Vir Amplissime, multa labor, multa  
iustis, vigiliae, praetico, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
tandem carum, quod ut iustis, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
optime ambulant, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
fovere cura atque inde, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
quo es secundum, bonorum, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
vero hoc atque ingens, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
in amplissimo dignitate, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
aut viro, & propius, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
doctioris ordis, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
ita, otio, studio patris inclinat, huiusmodi imperium forte ne  
seculum, quibus tantum involuta, huiusmodi imperium forte ne





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## ERRATA GRAVIORA.

PAGE ii. Line 28. read Llwyn. 30. LLewelyn. vi. 40. upwards of two years. vii. 45. 1648. xxii. 44. it. xxvi. 29. should. xxviii. 38. contribute. xxxvi. 30. intra.

P. 3. l. 38. r. help. 5. 27. pledges. 8. 46. to. 14. 20. there. 15. 49. proposition. 20. 37. hope. 21. 40. to. 22. 40. breach. 26. 24. him. 27. 18. Matth. v. 48. 31. 40. 34. 1. Phil. 40. 8. we. 42. 15. humble. 43. 31. proposition. 50. 57. destroyed by water. 70. 29. seeing. 77. 19. people. 173. 53. it is. 204. 27. of. 217. 29. wondered. 38. aver. 250. 14. ever see. 253. 9. Psal. lxxiv. 42. fail. 47. 0. 397. 13. *δὲν αὖ τὸς αἰῶνας*. 272. 8. take. 304. 21. *ἀγνῶσκει*. 336. 1. splendor. 344. 17. *ἀναγορεύει*. 347. 18. knowingly. 351. 38. stones. 355. 29. wrest. 360. 19. *dele* them. 25. r. Son. 384. 1. God's. 18. Matth. xvi. 18. 401. 15. of his. 403. 1. principal. 441. 21. an. 464. 28. *least*. 470. 7. *dele* than. 525. 34. r. believers. 541. 10. tho' they. 555. 13. works. 568. 5. *dele* cannot.

In the Marginal Notes. Pag. 215. lin. 12. read *gravam*. 13. *reformation* &c. 264. 1. *τὸν*. 2. *μὲν*. 321. 1. *exposuisset*. 2. *ἀνακαταστάσει*.



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